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SERMONS

PREACHED

ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

LONDON :
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Stephen Mackay
1846

SERMONS,

PREACHED

ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS,

BY

HENRY MELVILL, B.D.

PRINCIPAL OF THE EAST INDIA COLLEGE,

AND CHAPLAIN TO THE TOWER OF LONDON.

LONDON:

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1846.

THE first five of the following Sermons were preached by the appointment of his Grace the Duke of Wellington, and printed by the Corporation of Trinity House for their own use. It has been intimated to the author by several friends, that their publication in the present form would be acceptable, more especially if combined with other of his Sermons delivered upon public occasions. He has therefore been induced to commit this Volume to the press, hoping that it may not altogether disappoint the expectation so kindly entertained.

East India College,
Nov. 15, 1846.

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SERMON I.¹

THE GREATNESS OF BEING USEFUL.

ST. MATT. XX. 26, 27, 28.

“ But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant : even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

WE can easily suppose, that, if we introduced these words, without illustration or comment, into a circle of men unaccustomed to the acting on high Christian principles, they would be received with feelings of scorn and dislike. If in addressing an individual, whose prime object it is to make himself distinguished upon earth, we were to recommend to him the becoming the servant of his fellow-men, as the surest mode of reaching the coveted eminence, it is more than probable that our counsel, on first hearing,

¹ Preached before the Corporation of Trinity House, on Trinity Monday, 1838.

would be considered as an insult. Yet we believe it susceptible of the clearest proof, that in the precept or direction of our text lies the secret of that chief-taincy which alone deserves the name. We may venture to affirm, that it is to those who are the servants and ministers of their fellow-men that the world itself attaches the appellation of great; and that in proportion as the service and ministry are more laborious, and extend over broader districts of the earth, is there greater alacrity in bestowing the title. We will not deny that there may be apparent exceptions, and that some have been designated great, though even flattery could scarce urge that they had rendered signal service to others. But however it may sometimes happen that those who tread a dazzling, but destructive, career, win from the world the reputation of greatness, the falseness of the ascription is sooner or later acknowledged. When a man's achievements have become matter of history, and we can sit in judgment on his pretensions without the bias caused by too great proximity, the verdict is commonly reversed: neither the boldness of his undertakings, nor the brilliancy of his success, will prevail on us to ratify a decision which awards the denomination of great to one who has wrought injury, and not benefit, to the mass of humankind.

It will, we think, be found very appropriate to the present occasion and circumstances, that we should show you how the secret of greatness is contained in those words of our blessed Saviour which

we have chosen as our text. Our assertion is, that, in awarding the palm of true greatness, men are accustomed, however unconsciously, to act upon the principle, that whosoever will be chief must be the servant of all. To make good this assertion, it will only be necessary that we observe the cases in which, by universal consent, the title "great" is bestowed.

Now if a man have displayed extraordinary patriotism, so that, when his country has bent beneath the yoke of oppression, there have been the stirrings within him of an indomitable resolve to overthrow tyranny, and correspondent strivings to wrench off the chain by which his native land was bound—we may safely affirm of this man, that his name will be shrined in the hearts, and woven into the songs, of successive generations; and that there will be a thorough unanimity, amongst all who hear his deeds, as to the justice of assigning him the appellation of great. You will not find a dissentient voice, when opinions are being gathered as to the merits of one who stood up nobly in the face of the enemies of liberty, and won for a country, trampled down by a despot, that blessing of freedom which gives its worth to every other. Yet what has this patriot made himself but the servant of his countrymen? It was in order to the ministering to the well-being of thousands, that he threw himself into the breach, and challenged tyranny to the battle. It was for the sake of securing the rights of those who trod

the same soil with himself, that he arose as the champion of the wretched and injured. We will not indeed say that his motives were unmixed, so that he has been actuated by nothing having alliance with selfishness. On the contrary, there may have been little which could rightly be called disinterested; and his actions, if analyzed in their springs, might lose half their splendour. But, practically at least, whatever may have been his design, this patriot has acted as the minister to others; and it is simply because he has so acted, that he has encircled himself with imperishable renown. He has pleaded the cause of others, and dashed away the chain of others, and wrought a vast deliverance for others; and the result is the same as though, with a fine forgetfulness of self, he had devoted every energy and every resource to the good of others, and cast time, and talent, and strength, into one mighty sacrifice, that others might be advantaged by the prodigal oblation. So that, whilst a world is pronouncing his panegyric, and his fame seems only to increase as it is borne along from one age to another, we can confidently point him out, as exemplifying the truth of what Christ said to his disciples in our text: for if you would describe the mode in which he has gained his pre-eminent honours, you could not do it more accurately than by representing him as having acted on the maxim, "he who would be chief amongst you, let him be your servant."

The case is the same with the philosopher as with the patriot. We gladly give our praises to the individual, who, by the force of genius, and the labour of research, has enlarged the sphere of human knowledge, and pushed discovery further into the mysteries of nature. There is not a greater benefactor to the world than he who increases our acquaintance with the properties of matter, and lays open to us agencies which may be successfully employed in the occupations of life. We are not, for example, to regard the astronomer as a man busied indeed with high and brilliant speculation, but whose lofty calling is altogether unconnected with those of less-gifted spirits. None know better than many of the present audience, that, in his searchings over the beautiful and spangled face of heaven, he is gathering material for the guide-book by which the mariner shall make his way across the trackless waste of waters; and that thus are his sublime musings, and his mystic calculations, subservient to every operation of trade, and every movement of commerce. Truth is no isolated and uninfluential thing: let it once be discovered, and a thousand consequences may be traced, ramifying into the minutest concerns and the most ordinary occurrences. Accordingly, he who labours in the mine of truth, and presents to the world the results of his investigations, furnishes his fellow-men with new principles on which to act in the businesses of life, and thus equips them for fresh enterprises, and instructs them how to add to

the sum total of happiness. We need not exemplify this in particular instances. You are all aware how scientific research is turned to account in everyday life, and how the very lowest of our people enjoy, in one way or another, the fruits of discoveries which are due to the marvellous sagacity, and the repeated experiments, of those who rank foremost in the annals of philosophy. And thus is it evident that the man who is great in science, is great in the power of serving his fellow-men, and that it is this latter greatness which insures him their applauses. If his discoveries were of no benefit to the many; if they opened no means by which enjoyments might be multiplied, toil diminished, or dangers averted; his name would be known only within a limited circle, and there would be nothing that approached to a general recognition of superiority. But just in proportion that his discoveries bear on the universal happiness, will he be the object of the universal approbation; in proportion, that is, as he has been of service to many, will the many concede to him a high degree of honour; so that with philosophy as with patriotism, the achieved greatness will but illustrate the truth of the saying, "he who would be chief amongst you, let him be your servant."

And if further evidence be needed, that, in giving utterance to our text, Christ was not introducing a strange precept, but one which is virtually acted on by the world, may we not urge generally that the men who are most eminent in life, are the men who

are most literally the servants of the public? If a man be distinguished as a warrior, and if, by his skill and bravery, he have been enabled to secure victory to his country's arms, and to beat back invaders from his country's shores, there is not an individual in the meanest cottage of the land, in whose service this great leader has not been engaged, or for whose benefit he has not dared hardships, and perilled life. Nobles and princes may be foremost in doing him homage, as having upheld the majesty of a state, and defended its throne against a host of assailants. But he fought equally for the poor villager and the industrious artisan, for the helpless infant and the lonely widow: search the land, and there is not one to whom he has not ministered, not one for whom he has not laboured: and if then his name be, as it ought to be, a familiar and an honoured word in every hovel as in every palace, awakening the grateful applause of all ranks and ages, may we not justly declare of him, that he has become great amongst his countrymen through being their servant?

The individual again who gains renown as a statesman, who serves his country in the senate as the warrior in the field, is the minister to all classes, so that the very lowest have the profit of his toils. You have only to regard him as conducting the complicated affairs of government, turning all the energies of a comprehensive mind on preserving the liberty, guarding the property, and augmenting the

happiness, of a community, and you cannot fail to consider him as, in the strictest sense, the servant of the many, as employed for their welfare, whatever the reward reaped in a gratified ambition. Yea, and it is the being thus employed which constitutes his greatness: for he will rapidly lose his distinction and be forced from his eminence in public opinion, if it be once made apparent that the community is not advantaged by his services. Thus the position which is occupied is precisely that to which the direction of our text would have naturally led: the man stands amongst his fellows, exactly as we might have expected him to stand, had he guided himself by the maxim, "whosoever will be chief amongst them, let him be their servant."

And if, having traced in instances drawn from the world the identity of the being chief amongst many with the being their minister, we turn to those who have been eminent in religion, shall we not find that they, in like manner, have earned distinction by the services which they have rendered to others? When St. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself the servant of all, that I might gain the more," he delivered a truth which did not hold good of himself alone, nor in that only sense which was then specially intended, but which is applicable to all Christians in proportion as they imitate the Apostle's devotedness. If a man be very earnest in his endeavours to lighten the distresses, and scatter the ignorance, of

his fellow-men, expending time and fortune on schemes of benevolence, he will become widely known by his philanthropy, and thousands will combine to yield him applause. Yet, undoubtedly, the degree in which he is singled out from others, and confessed their superior, corresponds to the degree in which he has made himself their servant: for may not he, who spends his life in ministering to the necessitous and ignorant, be justly described as the servant of the necessitous and ignorant? As he busies himself with all the offices of tenderness, devoting himself to the soothing the wretched and enlightening the uninstructed, he is practically as much given up to the service of the suffering as though bound to it by the ties of an imposed obligation—the only difference being, that, in place of the coldness and reluctance of an hireling, there is the warmth and alacrity of a most active friendship. Here, then, we have the instance of a man, not merely making himself the servant of others, but the servant of those who have least ability of requiting. Yet it is on this very account that he becomes specially great. If he attached himself to the service of the noble and prosperous, there would rest suspicion on his motives; and we should be inclined to think, whatever the appearance of disinterestedness, that personal advantage was the chief thing proposed. And in proportion as the service wore the aspect of selfishness, would the tribute of

applause be diminished : we should be less and less disposed to allow, that, in making himself a servant, he had made himself great, if we had increasing cause to think that his main design was the serving himself. But there is no room for suspicions of this class, when the exhibition is that of a fine Christian philanthropy, leading a man to give his assiduity to the sick-beds of the poor, or the prisons of the criminal. Accordingly, when an individual is manifestly and strongly actuated by this philanthropy, there is an almost universal consent in awarding him the appellation of great : even those who would be amongst the last to imitate are amongst the first to applaud. There is no name, for example, which is held in deeper or more general veneration, than that of Howard ; and Howard won his wreath, not in the senate, and not on the field, but amid the darkness of dungeons, and the infection of lazarettoes. He grew great, great in the esteem of his own and of every following generation, through the prodigal devotion of all he had, and all he was, to the service of the wretched. And hence the principle announced in our text receives the strongest possible confirmation : a man has not only made himself a servant, but has gone down into that lowest of all positions which it was predicted that Canaan should occupy—"A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren"—and we find, that, in proportion to the degree of servitude, is the unanimity in confessing him chief :

then is he not a fresh and strong witness to the worth of the direction, "He who would be great amongst you, let him be your servant?"

It would, however, be unpardonable, if we were not for a moment to consider our text under another and more obvious point of view. Whatever the practical agreement between Christ's definition of greatness and that adopted by the world, it is evident that our Saviour's design was to recommend a virtue which finds no favour with the great mass of men. The expression, "let him be your servant," or "let him be your minister," may be considered as simply enjoining humility, as though it were through abasing himself that a man might look to be exalted. And it is not hard to discover why so great worth should be attached to humility, and why it should be exhibited as conducting finally to distinction. It is a moral warfare in which we are required to engage, and the promised rewards are to be given to those who master themselves. We are placed here on probation, as was Adam in Paradise, and our main trial, like his, is that of submission to the known will of God. And there exists in all of us a tendency to the seeking independence of God, to the acting as though we were wiser than He, and better understood what would minister to happiness. This tendency, in whatever way shown—for this will be different with different constitutions—is nothing but the working of pride, so that to counteract it is to acquire humility. And therefore it were scarcely

too much to say, that, in becoming humble, we become all which is demanded by the Gospel; for the mastery of pride, if this be its definition, must include or promote the subjugation of each passion which opposes our entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Where, then, the cause for surprise, if humility be represented as the high-road to greatness? The truly humble man must be, so far as character and achievements are concerned, the truly great man. I call not that man great who has conquered a nation, if he have failed, after all, to conquer himself. True greatness must be moral greatness, greatness of soul, that nobility of spirit which proves of a man that he has measured his duration, and proved himself indestructible. And I recognize this greatness, not necessarily when a man has a world bowing at his footstool, but when he is himself bowing at the footstool of God. The rebel against lawful authority cannot be truly great: the slave of his own passions cannot be truly great: the idolater of his own powers cannot be truly great. And the proud man is this rebel, this slave, this idolater; for pride spurns at the divine dominion, gives vigour to depraved affections, and exaggerates all our powers. What, then, can be more accurate than that pride destroys the chief elements of which a great character is compounded, so that it must be to direct a man in the way to eminence, to prescribe that he be "clothed with humility?" We know that when Christ shall re-appear, it will be to erect that king-

dom which his Apostles expected, and to distribute the rewards which have been promised from the first to those "faithful unto death." Who shall gain high rank in this kingdom? on whom shall be bestowed the most glorious of the rewards? We may dare to be sure that the most humble will be the most exalted. They have gone furthest in Christian attainment; for humility is not so much a single element in a righteous man's character, as that which pervades every other, and gives it, at the same time, fixedness and increase. They must be the men of the firmest faith, and the warmest love, and the most soaring hope; the men who have acquired the closest conformity to the image of the Mediator, seeing that this mind is most largely in them which was also in Christ, who humbled Himself, and, though rich, for our sakes became poor. They, then, must be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Theirs must be the loftiest throne, and theirs the noblest heritage. And I seem to hear nothing more than a declaration, that the recompenses of eternity will be dealt out with the very nicest regard to the progress which men have made in godliness, when I hear Christ saying to his disciples, emulous of distinction in his kingdom, "Whosoever will be great amongst you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief amongst you, let him be your servant."

We would now, however, recur to our first view of the maxim of our text, and again urge that he who would lay himself out for eminence, must lay

himself out for usefulness. Our argument is, that, however various and inconsistent might be the definitions of greatness, which would be furnished if you asked in different quarters, there is nothing needed but the examination of the cases in which greatness is acknowledged, and fresh evidence will be gained that the chief amongst many must be virtually their minister. May I not, for example, declare with perfect truth of the distinguished body which I am now appointed to address, that they are great through being useful? The servants of the very sailor-boy, who, after long voyaging, marks with rapture the distant light which your carefulness has kindled to guide him on his way; the ministers to the poorest wanderer on those narrow seas which gird about our island, who, without the aids which your pilots supply, would speedily perish on the rock or the quicksand; you certainly, if great as a corporation, are great through the method prescribed by our text. It is not because you may number amongst you the titled of the land; it is not because you may be enrolled under the illustrious alike in battle and in council—and where should victory more fitly preside than over commerce, to whose enterprises it opened land and sea?—it is because you are serviceable to thousands and tens of thousands, serviceable to the mariners whose lives you protect, serviceable to the merchants whose property you guard, serviceable to the empire to all whose intricate avenues you may be said to furnish the clue,

that so lofty a place is given you in public esteem : your usefulness has won for you that greatness which makes it an honourable thing even for the honoured to be incorporated with you ; so that their presence is the index rather than the cause of your dignity ; even as the stars and orders on a man of high achievement do not constitute, but proclaim him the benefactor of a nation. And if indeed it be thus your usefulness to which you owe your greatness, it must be fitting that we impress on you how thoroughly it is your interest, as well as your duty, to spare no pains in perfecting whatsoever may facilitate the navigation of our seas : each lighthouse which diminishes shipwreck is as a fresh diamond in your coronet ; and every improved chart is like a new patent of nobility. It is, moreover, worth observing, that the greatness which is thus derived from usefulness, may be augmented or decreased by the meanest of those whom you employ : the ignorance or intemperance of any one of your pilots may bring disgrace upon yourselves, by bringing ruin upon numbers who have been virtually committed to your guardianship ; and need we then add, that it would be to cease to be great, and to become even despicable, if ever private interest were suffered to advance incompetence, or shield drunkenness ? A high trust would be betrayed, if most rigid inquiries were not instituted into the skill and character of every one whom you empower to take charge of our vessels : but if, after such inquiries, the pilots

prove deficient in either knowledge or sobriety, in acquaintance with the waters through which they profess to steer, or in that steadiness which can alone make this acquaintance of use, you indeed are clear; but the pilots, and if any be present, let them hear, and remember, and report to their fellows, the pilots virtually incur the guilt of robbers, by destroying property, and of murderers, by destroying life.

But shall we be exceeding the bounds of our office, if, whilst treating of greatness as resulting from usefulness, and illustrating by the case of a corporation which has grown eminent through its care of our shipping, we point out the duty of making commerce subservient to the spread of Christianity, and the majesty which it would acquire through being thus employed? Nay, the very name which you bear seems to pledge you to the keeping other interests in view, besides those which more immediately engage your attention. Why have you drawn your designation from the great mystery of the Godhead, if not to give a holy character to the compass and rudder over which you preside, and to express, as it were, your belief that seas should be navigated under the loftiest auspice, and for the most sacred ends? That whatsoever concerns our pilotage is committed to a body, whose title proclaims the doctrine which especially distinguishes revealed religion from natural, might almost be interpreted into a national declaration, that trade

should be instrumental to the diffusing the Gospel. But we dare not think that such a declaration has been made good in our practice. There has never indeed been a country so connected as our own with every district of the earth. England has been mistress of the seas: every where has her flag floated, and every where commanded respect. Yet we have not made commerce tributary to Christianity: we have not practically regarded the sovereignty of the ocean as given us that we might be enabled to disseminate truth. Fleet after fleet has left our shores: the East, and West, and North, and South, have all been steered for by our adventurous ships: but we have swept into our harbours the riches and luxuries of the globe, without leaving in exchange the precious seed of God's word. And for this we may yet expect the divine retribution. Had we thoroughly blended the characters of a Christian and a commercial community, the merchants of this country might have been, by God's help, the evangelizers of the earth: and then could no fears have been felt as to the continuance of prosperity; our chieftaincy would have been, in the most splendid sense, the chieftaincy of usefulness, and we may be confident that the Almighty would have given it permanence. Whereas now it is impossible to be free from apprehension, that this country has yet to be called to account for the not having actually, whatever it may have done nominally,

consecrated its navigation to the ever-blessed Trinity. When we look on that finest spectacle which our metropolis presents—and this spectacle is not its streets, and not its parks, and not its palaces; but the forest of masts which rise for mile upon mile from its noble river,—and when we remember how, with Christianity at the helm of the swarming vessels, the glorious news of redemption might be rapidly borne over the habitable globe; it is not easy to repress all foreboding, to keep from anticipating a time when God may visit upon us the not having used in his cause the vast powers derived from our traffic, and when this nation shall cease to be great amongst kingdoms, through having failed to be their servant, “ministering the Gospel of God.” At least, let it be remembered by those who have in any way an influence on the commerce of the country, that God has given spiritual blessings to be diffused as well as enjoyed; and that it cannot be in his sight an indifferent thing, whether we keep them to ourselves, or act as stewards and communicate to others. Thousands on every side are perishing, according to the Scriptural expression, “for lack of knowledge:” what then shall be said of those, who, with the Bible in their hands, and with unrivalled facilities for its diffusion, take no pains to “hold forth the word of life,” if not that they are virtually as guilty as though a lighthouse had been given into their charge, and then, on some tremendous night,

when sea and sky mingled in fierce confusion, they had neglected to kindle the flame, and thus left a navy to be broken into shreds?

But we would now turn for a few moments, in conclusion, to that touching reference to his own case by which Christ illustrates the rule which we have been engaged in examining. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Who did not feel, whilst we were gathering illustrations from warriors and statesmen and philosophers and philanthropists, that we might have gone to a higher source, and have given one example, including, yet immeasurably surpassing, every other? It is true that the most eminent amongst men are their servants; for eminence results from usefulness, and usefulness from the dedication of energies to the service of others. But where is there an instance of this dedication of energies, which can for a moment be compared with that presented by the history of Jesus? How true, and how affecting, was the language which He used, when his disciples were contending as to who should be reckoned greatest, "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." It was for the very meanest, as well as for the noblest of the children of men, that the Redeemer engaged in that stern work which could be accomplished only through sorrow and death. Which of us is there who can say that this Redeemer

did not perform on his behalf the most servile of offices, stooping to every kind of indignity, enduring every form of hardship, and undertaking every species of toil? But if Christ thus made Himself servant to the human race, it is this very fact which is to draw to Him finally universal homage. Had He not been their servant, He could not have been their Redeemer; and, if not their Redeemer, then at his name would not every knee have bowed, "of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Thus He illustrates his own precept: He became great through redeeming; but since He redeemed through making Himself the minister to a lost world, He became great through becoming a servant. Can I then need other proof of the worth of the direction furnished by our text? I "consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself," and I find that the office which He undertook was one of humiliation, an office which can be no better defined, whatever its awfulness and arduousness, than as that of a servant; for it was an office of unbounded toil that a burdened world might be lightened, and of continued suffering that a stricken world might have peace. And when I further observe that all which is most sublime in exaltation was awarded to "the man Christ Jesus," in recompense of his discharging this office, do I not learn, that if I would stand high in his kingdom, I must imitate Him in lowliness, and in devotion to the interests of all classes of my fellow-men?

There can then be no dispute as to the secret of true greatness: it only remains, that, having the rule, we adopt it in our practice. Earthly greatness, in the ordinary sense, is attainable but by few: heavenly is within reach of all, who, as the servants of God, make themselves the servants of man. And a day is approaching when the important question will be, not whether we have stood high in the present world, but whether we have prepared ourselves for the next. The voyage of life is drawing rapidly to a close; and on that shore, to which all are hastening, must the illustrious stand with the mean, the conqueror with the conquered, the wise with the illiterate, to be "judged according to their works." It is our own fault, if the voyage terminate disastrously. What? is there no beacon, lit up for those who toss on darkened waters? is there no pilot to steer the labouring vessel? is there no anchor to hold her fast amid the drivings of the storm? Christ hath come "a light to lighten the Gentiles;" and his cross, like a moral pharos, directs to immortality. There hath descended the promised Comforter, to guide the wandering to everlasting rest. There is provision in the Gospel for a hope which "maketh not ashamed," "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast."

Then we have but to use the means, and appropriate the blessings, proffered by the Bible, and when the last tempest beats on this creation, and

the proud and the sensual and the selfish go down in one wild wreck, we shall be found in “the haven where we would be;” on that “sea of glass like unto crystal,” which St. John saw spreading before the throne of God and of the Lamb.

SERMON II.¹

CHRISTIANITY THE GUARDIAN OF HUMAN LIFE.

ECCLESIASTES vii. 12.

“The excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.”

It will readily be admitted, that we interpret this passage consistently with the other writings of Solomon, if we understand by knowledge, knowledge of God, and by wisdom, “the wisdom that is from above.” It will also be allowed, that we do not propose any strained application of the text, if we understand by knowledge and wisdom what those terms represent under the Christian dispensation, as distinguished from that beneath which Solomon lived. If these preliminaries be conceded, the text appears specially applicable to the present occasion. For it may be said to claim, as one great charac-

¹ Preached before the Corporation of Trinity House, on Trinity Monday, 1840.

teristic of the Christian religion, the being the giver or guardian of human life: what then can be more appropriate to the assembling of an illustrious corporation, which, bearing on its banner the great mystery of the Godhead, sets itself to preserve thousands who could scarcely escape death, were it not assiduous in firing the beacon and fixing the buoy?

Such, then, is the point of view under which we have to display Christianity. Christianity is the dispenser of life to the human body and soul. Let other knowledge vaunt itself on this or that excellency: we claim for "the wisdom that is from above," the giving "life to them that have it."

Now we may unhesitatingly charge upon Hea-thenism, even if you keep out of sight its debasing effect upon morals, and think of it only as a system of religious ceremonies and observances, the having a direct tendency to the destroying men's lives. It commonly represents the Deity as delighting in the sufferings of his creatures, and therefore seeks to propitiate him through slaughter. It has not been merely amongst the more savage of Pagans, but also amongst those who have advanced far in civilization, that the custom has prevailed of offering human sacrifices. Writers the best qualified by learned research for delivering an opinion, assert that there is no nation mentioned in history whom we cannot reproach with having shed the blood of its citizens, in order to appease the Divinity when he appeared

angry, or to rouse him when indolent. The Grecians made great progress in sciences and arts; yet it would seem to have been a rule with each of their states, to sacrifice men before they marched against an enemy. The Romans, who emulated the Grecians in civilization, appear not to have been behind them in the cruelties of their religion: even so late as in the reign of Trajan, men and women were slain at the shrine of some one of their deities. As to the heathenism of less refined states, it would be easy to affix to it a yet bloodier character: nothing, for example, could well exceed the massacres, connected with religious rites, which appear to have been common among the nations of America: the annual sacrifices of the Mexicans required many thousands of victims, and in Peru two hundred children were devoted for the health of the sovereign. What a frightful destruction of life! But Christianity owns only one human sacrifice, and, through that one, death itself was abolished.

But we should vastly underrate the influence of Christianity in saving human life, were we merely to compute from the abolition of the destructive rites of heathenism. The influence has been exerted in indirect modes yet more than in direct. We need hardly tell you that Christianity has proved the great civilizer of nations, heightening the morals, and enlarging the charities of communities, so that, beneath its righteous sceptre, animosities have subsided, and happiness has been increasingly diffused. And whilst

it has thus, in the general, polished and compacted society, it has spread, in a hundred ways, a shield over human life. It has gradually substituted mild for sanguinary laws, teaching rulers that the cases must be rare which justify the punishing with death. If it have not yet exterminated war, it has greatly softened its horrors. It has made warriors—who can withhold his admiration?—who never sullied victory by cruelty, who never wantonly caused a tear, who were always as eager to protect the unoffending as able to subdue the opposing, and who never vanquished without studying to make defeat a blessing to the conquered.

And what but Christianity, giving sacredness to human life, ever taught men to erect asylums for the sick and the aged? Hospitals and infirmaries are among the most splendid of the trophies of Christianity. They were never found in heathen times and lands. Monarchs never reared them, though half a world stood ready to execute their bidding. Warriors never planned them, though the carnage which they wrought might have suggested their necessity. Philosophers never demanded them, though the virtue which they praised was but a name without compassion. But there came “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” and at his word, the earth was covered with homes for the afflicted.

Add to this the mighty advancements which have been made under the fostering sway of Christianity in every department of science. It matters not what

may be the connexion between the two; the fact is, that knowledge of every kind has walked side by side with the religion of Christ, as though, in unchaining the human spirit, and pointing it heavenwards, this religion gave enlargement to the mind, and strengthened it for discovery. And how wonderfully, in promoting knowledge, has Christianity preserved life! The study of the body, of its structure and diseases; acquaintance with the properties of minerals and plants; skill in detecting the sources of pain, and applying remedies or assuagements—all this would appear peculiar, in a great degree, to Christian nations; as if there could be only inconsiderable progress in medical science, whilst a land were not trodden by the alone Physician of the Soul.

And need we point out to such an assembly as the present—themselves the best witnesses—how knowledge of other kinds, cherished by Christianity, has subserved the preservation of life? Witness astronomy, watching the mariner, lest he be bewildered on the waters. Witness chemistry, directing the miner, that he perish not by subterranean fires. Witness geography, with its maps and charts, informing the traveller of dangers, and pointing him to safety. Witness architecture, rearing the lighthouse on rocks, where there seemed no foundation for structures which might brave the wild storm, and thus warning away navies which must otherwise have perished. Witness machinery, providing

for the poorest, what once the wealthy alone could obtain, the means of guarding against inclement seasons, and thus preserving health when most rudely threatened. We assert, that for the science, thus continually and powerfully exerted on the saving human life, we are practically indebted, through one cause or another, to the Christian religion. It is science which had made little or no way till this religion gained ascendancy, which is still comparatively a stranger where this religion has no footing; and if the religion and the science always go hand in hand, we may assume, without entering on lengthened demonstration, that they are virtually connected as cause and effect.

But who, after this hurried survey of the influence of Christianity, can hesitate as to the truth of that assertion of Solomon which is under review? If ever there were an assertion, proof of which seemed to start from history, from every thing above, from every thing around us, it is that which ascribes to Christianity the preserving human life. Yes, Christianity, if we may personify thee at all, we would personify thee as the guardian, the giver of life. Thou hast cut down the groves, and levelled the temples, where a misinformed priesthood slew their fellow-men. Thou hast covered lands with receptacles for the suffering, who must otherwise die for want of succour. Thou hast placed mercy on the judgment-seat; yea, taught it to find a home amid scenes of bloodshed, so that multitudes live, who,

without thy mild sway, would be indiscriminately slaughtered. Thou hast led the way to medicinal springs, and instructed us to arrest the ravages of disease. Thine is the marshalling of the rich troop of stars on the guide-book of the mariner, that he may be safe in his wanderings. Thou hast lit the lamp for the adventurous, as they penetrate the depths of the earth. Thine is the beacon against shipwreck; thine the mechanism for multiplying the necessaries and comforts of life; thine the legislation which takes note of the destitute; thine the philanthropy which leads numbers to be on the watch for the suffering; thine the skill which often restores those in whom life seems extinct. O then, we may well address thee as the preserver of human life, and feel that to thee alone belong the beautiful words, "The excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it."

But it were greatly to wrong Christianity as a giver of life, were we to confine our illustrations to the bodies, in place of extending them to the souls of men. We have higher evidence than any yet assigned, that Christianity is the only wisdom which will answer the description contained in our text. It may be said of the world, in every period of its history, "The world by wisdom knew not God." And they who have been most successful in scientific inquiry, have not only been often destitute of acquaintance with God, but deprived of it through the very knowledge for which they have laboured, and

of which they have been proud. There is a tendency in earthly science, to the encouraging that haughtiness of spirit which is directly opposed to religion: they who are distinguished by its attainments, are the most likely to be staggered by the direction of the Apostle, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." But, without considering human wisdom as opposed to the acquisition of heavenly, what is it in itself, as to the power of giving life, when you regard man as an accountable being, and examine how he may stand at the tribunal of God? Will philosophy give any information as to the pardon of sin? Will reason open up any method through which God can be "just and the justifier?" Can natural theology carry us beyond the discovery of our hopeless condition? Can it suggest a remedy? rather, is not its highest achievement, the proving us exposed to the wrath of the Almighty, the showing us that the attributes of God pledge Him to take vengeance on the sinful, and that the disorganization, too visible throughout this creation, is evidence that the vengeance is already let loose?

Our liability to punishment is discoverable by human wisdom, but the possibility of our escaping it not without heavenly; and hence there is no life-giving power in the former. It is nothing to me, ye men of science, that ye are ready to instruct me in the motions of stars, that ye will take me with you into the laboratories of nature, and there

show me the processes of her mysterious chemistry. I dread to look upon the stars; for I feel that I have made their architect mine enemy: I shrink from the wonders of nature; for I know that I have provoked the mighty being who controls them. It is nothing, that ye offer to instruct me in the relations of substances; in the connexion of cause and effect; in the events of other days; in the principles of jurisprudence. I am a dying creature, yet an immortal; sinful, and nevertheless accountable; and if ye cannot tell me how I may prepare for futurity, how meet death with composure, and enter eternity with hope, miserable instructors are ye all! And ye cannot tell me: I must turn to a higher teacher, and seek wisdom at a purer source. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," He hath revealed a method of reconciliation, and offers his Spirit to assist us in the availing ourselves of what He hath done for the world. Sunk by nature in a death of "trespasses and sins," we are both invited and enabled to "walk in newness of life."

For the wisdom which the Holy Ghost continually imparts to such as submit to his influence, is, from first to last, a quickening, vivifying thing. It makes the believer alive, in the sense of being energetic for God and for truth; alive, as feeling himself immortal; alive, as having thrown off the bondage of corruption; alive, as knowing himself "begotten again" "to an inheritance that fadeth not away."

“I live,” said the great Apostle, “yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” And life indeed it is, when a man is made “wise unto salvation;” when, having been brought to a consciousness of his state as a rebel against God, he has committed his cause unto Christ, “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” It is not life, it deserves not the name, merely to have power of moving to and fro on this earth, beholding the light, and drinking in the air. It may be life to the brute, but not to man,—man who is deathless, man who belongs to two worlds; the citizen of immensity, the heir of Eternity. But it is life to spend the few years of earthly pilgrimage in the full hope and certain expectation of everlasting blessedness; to be able to regard sin as a forgiven thing, and death as abolished; to anticipate the future with its glories, the judgment with its terrors, and to know assuredly that He who shall sit upon the throne, and gather all nations before Him, reserves for us a place in those “many mansions” which He reared and opened through his great work of mediation. It is life to live for eternity; it is life to live for God; it is life to have fellowship with what the eye hath not seen and the ear hath not heard. And there is not one amongst us who may not thus live. There is needed only that, renouncing all wisdom of our own, we come unto God to be taught, and we shall receive the gift of the Spirit, that Spirit which is breath to

the soul, quickening it from the death of nature, and causing its torpid energies and perverted affections to rise to their due use, and fix on their due end. We cannot find this life-giving wisdom in the schools of the learned; we must not seek it through the workings of reason, nor suppose it taught by the books of philosophy. But if we will come, as little children, to the Bible, and suffer its statements to guide us to the Cross, assuredly we shall acquire what alone should be called knowledge,—knowledge, if not of the stars, yet of Him who made the stars; knowledge, if not of what is perishable, of that which is imperishable; knowledge of self; knowledge of sin, of its guilt, and its pardon; we shall know ourselves lost without Christ, but saved, with an everlasting salvation, through his precious blood and perfect righteousness.

And the excellency of this knowledge is, that, having it, you will have life. You cannot have it, except in the heart; for no man knows Christ, who knows Him only with the head. And having this knowledge in the heart, you have renewal of the heart; and with renewal of the heart, forgiveness of sin, and the earnest of immortality. Are we not now, therefore, able to vindicate in all its extent the assertion of our text? In the former part of the verse, the wise man had allowed that “wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence.” Money is a defence to the man of wealth; it shields him against a hundred evils which beat upon the poor. Wisdom

is a defence to the man of knowledge; in a vast variety of circumstances, he is on a vantage-ground as to others who possess not his attainments. But "riches profit not in the day of wrath," and "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." Where will be the rich man's defence, when he shall be parted from the gold which has been to him as an idol? where the wise man's, when the last conflagration shall enfold every object which he has delighted to study? But they, whose treasure has been above,—they, who have counted "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ,"—they shall have a defence, a sure defence, when the rich man is destitute, and the wise man speechless. They have chosen that which cannot be taken away, and which indeed is then only fully possessed, when every thing else departs from human hold. "On such the second death hath no power;" they are "children of the resurrection;" "neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels." And as they soar to inherit the kingdom obtained for them by Christ, and thus lay hold on an immortality of joy, through having acquainted themselves with Him, as "the way, the truth, and the life," there may be none to say that "money is a defence, and wisdom is a defence,"—none to say it, in the face of the confounding witness of the elements melting with fervent heat, and of the shrinking away of those who had been "wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight;" but the whole com-

pany of the redeemed shall be joined by the thousand times ten thousand of the celestial host, in confessing and publishing that the excellency of knowledge is, "that wisdom," Christian wisdom, "giveth life to them that have it."

And assuredly, as we hinted in commencing our discourse, the point of view under which we have thus endeavoured to place Christianity, is one most appropriate to the present occasion. The Corporation, before which I have the honour to speak, has grown great by acting upon Christian principles, and thereby becoming pre-eminently the guardian of human life. If it derive its name from that prime mystery of our faith, the full revelation of which was reserved for Christian times, it may be said to derive its object from that description of his mission, which our blessed Saviour gave, when He declared to his disciples, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." How many a weeping widow would there be, who is now a happy wife; how many a desolate orphan, how many a childless parent; had you not consecrated science to the noblest of purposes,—had you not, with as much industry as skill, fathomed the seas which beat against our shores, hung the firmament with stars in the darkest night, and traced a path where even time leaves no furrow. I regard such a Corporation as emphatically an illustration of the truth, that Christianity is a life-giving thing. Ye cannot, indeed, labour at preserving life, without

labouring also at preserving property. But it has been, it is, life, which ye specially aim to protect: the poor sailor-boy has a dignity in your eyes, because made in God's image, and redeemed by Christ's blood; for his sake ye are ready to lavish treasure and toil; and if ye enrol yourselves under one whose arm has launched resistlessly the thunderbolt of war, it is that you may give the most affecting of proofs, that the heart to care for the mean may be found with the hand to crush the mighty.

And if it be thus your splendid office, to prove of Christianity that "it giveth life to them that have it," may we not justly exhort you to the using all diligence, that the office may be discharged with greater and greater fidelity? Ye assemble not annually in the house of that God, whom, by your very name, ye profess to honour as "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," to commemorate your achievements, and hear your praises. Ye rather assemble to be reminded of your duties, to stand, as it were, once more round the altar of the Lord, and to devote yourselves, by a fresh vow, to your magnificent calling. I could imagine the vow heard by the genius of the storm, causing him to feel as though his prey were snatched from him. The sound goes forth upon the waters,—if it cannot speak them, like the voice of Christ Himself, into stillness, it emulates that voice in bidding those who traverse them, "Be of good cheer."

Yes, I do regard you as gathered for the lofty purpose of consecrating yourselves anew to the guardianship of life. And it gives a majestic aspect to this our assembling, to consider it designed for the throwing fresh ardency into a conflict with death. Followers of Him, who could describe Himself as “the Resurrection and the Life,” of whom it was emphatically said, that He “abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel;” ye meet to resolve that the grave shall not conquer without a struggle; that, if thousands must yet go down with the waves for their winding-sheet, thousands more, though environed by peril, shall escape safe to shore, warned by your beacons, guided by your charts, and steered by your pilots. Surely it can hardly be that the vow will be made by any insincerely, or that it will not be acted upon fervently. If there be the sunken rock, which has not hitherto been sufficiently marked; the channel, whose intricacies have not been industriously explored; the sandbank, whose position has not been carefully defined; the pilot, whose sobriety and knowledge have not been thoroughly ascertained; ye will go hence to improve and perfect the arrangements which have already done so much to vindicate for Christianity the high praise of preserving human life. In some respects ye have more power than in others; but in all ye have done enough to warrant the expectation, that, ere long, there will be scarcely a deficiency to supply. Rocks, indeed, and shoals,

and quicksands, require not your constant vigilance : once accurately defined, you have done your part in directing how to shun them. But pilots demand incessant attention : you authorize them as guardians of property and life : you pledge yourselves to the world for their competence : alas, what a blot were it on your glorious escutcheon, if, though no carefulness can secure you against faithless servants, carelessness should admit those whose unworthiness might have been known ! It is like admitting into the priesthood a man whose unfitness a strict scrutiny would have detected : the pilot who cannot steer the labouring ship, like the pastor who cannot guide the wandering soul, is risking men's eternity ; the one may cut off opportunities of repentance, as the other may fail to impress its necessity ; both, therefore, may work an everlasting injury ; and surely, in regard of both, they who might have prevented the injury, are not clear of its commission.

There remains nothing but that we tell you, with all simplicity and affection, that, in proportion as ye are yourselves fraught with the wisdom which gives life, will ye be fitted for the faithful performance of duties which, dictated by Christianity, throw over it a lustre, and establish its excellency. For never let it be thought that any trust can be as well discharged without as with personal religion. To receive into the heart "the wisdom which is from above," is to fit ourselves for the tasks assigned us

below. Let me borrow an illustration from an English nobleman, whose son had objected that no apparent good followed the rite of Confirmation, that there was no visible difference between those who submitted to, and those who neglected, so sacred an ordinance. "Tell me," said the father, "what difference your eye can detect between two needles, one of which has received an electric shock, whilst the other has not? And yet the one has hidden virtues, which occasion will show, of which the other has none. The electric shock has rendered the one needle a magnet, which, duly balanced, will enable man to find his way across the trackless ocean. As this needle, so may that soul be, which has received the electric shock of the Holy Ghost: on the ocean of a sinful world, it shall point wanderers to the haven of everlasting rest."

I borrow this illustration, and dare assert, that, if the eye cannot scan the difference, yet will they who open the heart to the religion of Jesus, be the needle which has received the electric shock, as compared with others who know that religion only in name. They will be emphatically givers of life, as though, like the needle, they were endowed with new properties, and men might steer by them in the darkest night and on the roughest waters. Feeling that they have drawn life, eternal life, from Christ, they will burn with desire to lead others to the Saviour, and to prove his Gospel, in every sense,

the chart and charter of the world. And therefore do we know, that, in exhorting each to be watchful, that he make not shipwreck of the soul, we take the best means of urging upon each, that, in his station and place, he be more assiduous than ever in perfecting arrangements for preserving human life. Our exhortation, then, is, that ye prepare to "appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," lest, having reared the lighthouse, ye be yourselves dashed against the rocks; having furnished the pilot, ye be driven with no compass into eternity, that ocean unfathomable, and without a shore. Terrible will be the hurricane, when, in the midst of dissolving elements, of falling worlds, the Son of man shall appear as Judge of quick and dead. Then shall many a noble ship, freighted with reason, and talent, and glorious and beautiful things, be broken into shreds. Then shall many a bark founder which had floated gracefully along, with every flag flowing as though life had been a holiday. And the only vessels which shall ride out the storm, shall be those which, having made the Bible their map, and Christ their light, steered boldly for a new world, in place of coasting the old.

S E R M O N III.¹

THE LEAST OF SERVICE TO THE GREATEST.

I CORINTHIANS xii. 21.

“ And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee ;
nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”

THE Corinthian Church, here addressed by St. Paul, was unhappily torn by many schisms and dissensions. There had been a rich distribution amongst its members, of the various miraculous endowments which accompanied, or resulted from, the effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost ; but these gifts, in place of being used for purposes of edification, were ostentatiously displayed, and made occasions of bitterness and contention.

To show the wrongness and unreasonableness of this state of things, St. Paul drew an illustration from the human body, in which a great variety of

¹ Preached before the Corporation of Trinity House, on Trinity Monday, 1842.

members and organs combined to the producing symmetry and strength. It was evident that the parts of this curious and admirable structure, had very different offices; but it was equally evident, that no part could be dispensed with without injury to the rest. So dependent were the several members the one on the other, the weakest on the strongest, the strongest on the weakest, that none could be regarded as unimportant, however mean the functions which it had to discharge. This was parallel, the Apostle argued, to the case of the Christian Church or community. The Church was composed of many members, differing in office and gifts. Some of these members, as in the human body, were comparatively without honour, but none without use. Even the meanest had its appropriate functions, functions as essential to the general well-being as those of the more dignified. The men who fill subordinate stations in the Church, or in society, can no more be spared than those who fill the higher: and if the latter look down on them with contempt, it is as absurd as if the finer organs of the body were to declare themselves independent on the less honoured.

This is the general idea suggested by the figurative language of our text; and we think, that in following out and illustrating this idea, we can hardly fail to find material of discourse especially adapted to the present audience and occasion.

Now it is beautiful to observe, what close links

there are between the several classes in a community, and how the breaking of any one would go far towards dislocating the whole social system. It is the saying of Solomon, "The king himself is served by the field;" and the saying points out how the throne is connected with the soil, how the illustrious occupant of the one depends on the tiller of the other. It is literally from the field that all the arts and comforts of civilized life spring. Man's first toil is to wring subsistence from the earth: till this is secured, he can do nothing towards providing what is not absolutely indispensable to existence. And though God has mercifully ordered that the earth should yield its productions with glorious prodigality, and that, therefore, out of a teeming population, only few need give themselves to agriculture—the labour of one procuring food for numbers, and thus leaving numbers at liberty to give themselves to other callings and pursuits—it is too evident to need proof, however easily it may be overlooked, that it is actually the soil which furnishes, and actually the tiller of the soil who extracts, the material of which is composed the whole fabric of a thriving community.

When you look on such a community, on its nobles rich in ancestral honours and rights, on its merchants covering the ocean with their fleets, on its preachers devoting themselves to the diffusion of Christianity, on its men of science advancing daily the boundaries of knowledge, on its artificers pro-

ducing a thousand luxuries and elegancies, you may, perhaps, think little of the peasantry who are truly the upholders of the splendid combination, and the mainspring which actuates its mighty rotations. Yet you have only to suppose the peasantry ceasing from their labours—the tillers of the field, that is, refusing, or unable, to perform any longer their part in the general economy—and there would be an almost immediate arrest on the businesses and enjoyments of the stirring community; every wheel would be clogged, every impulse suspended; so that, from the throne downwards, through every grade and division of society, there would be no aspect but of panic, and no thought but of warding off starvation.

And if this be incontrovertible, who can fail to recognize a mutual dependence amongst the ranks of a community, causing such a blending and interweaving of the several interests, that, if the poor need the rich, the rich stand, at least equally, in need of the poor? There cannot be a more pitiable spectacle than that of a haughty individual, who looks superciliously on the occupants of lower stations than his own. We call it a pitiable spectacle, because manifesting thorough ignorance in regard of the links in the social chain, and of the contributions which the inferior classes make to the dignities of the higher. A land, covered with palaces, but without cottages—what would it be but a land covered with costly sepulchres? The sumptuousness of the palace was produced, and is sustained, through the

honest industry which may be found in the cottage; and the effectual way of bringing down the fine structure, or turning it into a mausoleum for its inmates, would be to paralyze the activities of that humble race of men whose whole life is one round of labour and drudgery. Are we not, then, warranted in defining as a pitiable spectacle, that of a man who despises his inferiors, looking on them with contempt, as though he owed them nothing, whereas they are in truth his benefactors and upholders? Would it not be a just rebuke of his arrogance, to set before him the closeness of his association with the meanest of his countrymen, to require him to trace the production and progress of that wealth, or that rank, which ministers to his pride, till he found it originating in the bone and muscle of the objects of his scorn?

Yes, we think, that in showing men, as we easily may, that society is so constituted, that its upper classes derive their advantages through the industry of the lower, so that a derangement would be nowhere so fatal as amongst those who bear the least honoured offices, we effectually expose the preposterousness of that pride which would put a slight on the poor and ignoble. For what is to be said of any conceited assumption of independence, of any contempt of those who fill subordinate places, when it can be proved as true in the body politic as in the body natural, that "the eye cannot say unto the

hand, I have no need of thee ; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you ?”

But let us consider this great fact under a somewhat more practical point of view—at least, under one that will more forcibly commend itself to a Christian assembly. It is easy to suppose, though there may never have occurred, the case of a community from which was banished every thing like want, so that, though gradations of rank might still exist, there should be every where sufficiency, and perhaps even abundance. This is a state of things for which many philanthropists ardently long, and the arriving at which they would count the arriving at the very perfection of the social system. They look with melancholy feelings on the unequal distribution of temporal advantages ; and commiserating the destitution of thousands in an over-peopled land, think that it would be vastly for the general good, if there could be in every family independence and plenty. And thus would they desire to take away from amongst us the actually destitute, reckoning that it would be nothing less than the mighty regeneration of a country, to make its every inhabitant independent on the benevolence of every other.

But, for our own part, we know not how to join in this longing for what might be called universal affluence. We have always regarded these words of the Bible, “the poor shall never cease out of the land,” as announcing one of those wise and beneficent

arrangements of Providence which so eminently distinguish the moral government of the world. And if you could find us the land, in respect of which these words were no longer verified, the land out of which the poor had ceased, so that his own resources were adequate to the wants of every inhabitant, it would not be the sunshine in its sky, nor the verdure on its fields, which could persuade us of the desirableness of dwelling in that land. We speak now, of course, of the moral advantages which a country might present, of its desirableness as a residence for those in quest of spiritual improvement; and we say, that the country in which it would be hardest to make progress in genuine piety, would be that from which the poor had altogether ceased, in whose habitations none were to be found requiring the succours of Christian benevolence. One of the most fatal, and, at the same time, most common, of the tendencies of our nature, is the tendency to selfishness. The forgetting others and the caring only for ourselves—we can scarcely help being aware that there is nothing to which we are more prone than to this; so that all our watchfulness is required to prevent our settling into narrow-hearted things, with no joy but in our own advancement, and no sorrow but in our own trouble. And who can fail to see that the having amongst us objects which continually appeal to our compassions, the being placed in such circumstances that the spectacle of suffering is frequently forced on our

observation, and the tale of distress on our attention, is wonderfully adapted to the counteracting that tendency to which we have referred? At least, if in spite of the multiplied occasions on which we now come in contact with objects demanding our sympathy and soliciting our succour, we find it intensely difficult to keep the affections from centering on ourselves, must we not believe that the difficulty would be greatly enhanced, were the afflicted and destitute removed from amongst us, so that there should be none to excite pity, and none to need assistance? And why, then, should we hesitate to pronounce the poor,—those who cannot sustain themselves by their own industry, but whom one cause or another makes dependent on the wealthy,—the blessings and benefactors of a community?

We can imagine such a revolution in the circumstances of this country, that many of its public structures might no longer be required for the purposes to which they were originally devoted. The spacious receptacles into which commerce brings the treasures of the globe might be closed; for the enterprise and capital of our merchants might be exhausted, or wholly overborne by foreign competition. There might no longer be men of science amongst us, to throng buildings reared in honour of learning and for the advancement of knowledge. The proud edifices might crumble, within which are gathered trophies of victory and implements of war; for we might have descended from our lofty position,

and have settled into the sullenness of a subjugated province. But we might be a virtuous and a Christian people, though our fleets no longer swept every sea, and we were no longer conspicuous, whether by literary taste or martial prowess. It would not be the downfall of our vast warehouses, of our splendid museums, or of our towering arsenals, which could fill us with apprehensions for the spiritual well-being of our people. The structures whose removal, because they were no longer requisite, would seem to us most ominous to the vital Christianity of the nation—always excepting our churches, in regard of which the supposition is impossible—are our hospitals, infirmaries, and almshouses, structures consecrated to the reception of the indigent and afflicted, and the closing of which would indicate that there was no longer much sphere for the exercise of philanthropy. Whilst you swept away buildings which belong to us as a rich, intelligent, and powerful people, we should feel, that though there might be much in the removal that was humiliating, there might be much also that was profitable; and that the likelihood was far from inconsiderable, that the national Christianity would eventually be strengthened through changes so mortifying to the national pride. But when you came to remove structures reared for the shelter of the miserable, we should feel the removal an indication that henceforward there would be little appeal to the sympathies of the heart; and we should therefore anticipate the

rapid growth of that selfishness which is utterly opposed to the religion of Christ, which marks out a people as morally worthless, whatever their wealth, their science, and their power.

Thus do we unhesitatingly regard the halt, the maimed, and the blind, the widow in her penury, and the orphan in his loneliness, as virtually amongst the most useful members of our community, keeping that community from hardening into a heartless mass, and preserving in healthful play its sympathies and sensibilities. It may be perfectly true, that the indigent cannot do without the benevolent; but it is equally true, that the benevolent cannot do without the indigent. And we pray you to observe, that whensoever you give ear to a tale of distress, and the heart melts at the cry of suffering, and you contribute, according to your ability, to the relief of the suppliant, you receive as well as confer benefit; the afflicted being whom you succour, and thereby make greatly your debtor, keeps, by his appeal, the charities of your nature from growing stagnant, and thus may be said to requite the obligation. Oh, let no Christian think that he could safely dispense with the presence and pleadings of the poor and the sorrowful! Place him out of the sight of their woe, and the reach of their cry, and we can answer for it that he would make slower progress than ever in the graces of the Gospel, and that his moral condition would be daily less hopeful. And thus, when you view men with reference to their spiritual interests,

considering them as combined by God into societies that they may have means and opportunities for exercising the virtues and securing the rewards of Christianity, we know not how you can hesitate to set side by side the possessor of every advantage and another who is bankrupt even in hope, him who is at the summit and him who is at the bottom of human condition, and to declare, in the expressive language of our text, "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."

This general argument might, if time permitted, be broken into detail. We might show you, by various exemplifications, how applicable is the principle of our text in regard of the several classes of society. It were easy to enlarge on the utter uselessness of orders or individuals, who may be likened to the more honourable members of the body, were there not other orders or individuals, who may, with equal fitness, be likened to the less honourable. Of what avail, for example, would be the courage and skill of a general without troops to obey his commands?—of what the ingenuity of the engineer, were there no labourers to employ his inventions?—of what the wisdom of the legislator, without functionaries to carry his measures into force? In these, and a thousand like instances, if it be necessary for the hand and the feet that they be directed by the eye and the head, the eye and the head would be of no use if unconnected with the hand and the feet.

The clergyman, again, is a case in point. If those ordained to minister in the congregation may, from the importance of their office, be likened to the eye or the head in the body, they depend greatly on the very lowest of the people, as they prosecute their honourable and difficult employment. For if, as we endeavoured to show you, the actual presence of suffering be the great antagonist to that general selfishness which would be fatal to the growth of Christianity, the poor of his flock must be a clergyman's best auxiliaries, seeing that they help to keep the rest from that moral hardness which would make them impervious to his most earnest remonstrance. Thus, we are met on every side by illustrations of the principle involved in the text, that the least is of service to the greatest. It is a principle to be carefully remembered and upheld. I cannot confine to the upper classes of society the power of being dignified, and of filling a vastly-important part in the general economy. It is no want of loyalty, neither is it forgetfulness of what a country owes to its nobles, if, after surveying the owners of a palace, and marking the diligence with which they give themselves to the lofty functions entailed by their grandeur, I pass to one of the meanest of our cottages, and, finding its inmates prosecuting daily toils with industry, and bearing daily privations with patience, feel that in all which is inherently great and essentially good, the inhabitants of the hovel are on a level with those of the

magnificent ancestral abode. Poverty will never degrade a man; nothing but vice will do that. Poverty will never disable a man for usefulness, seeing that it can but change his office in the body, and there is no office unimportant to the general health. Why, then, are not our poor, our honest, hard-working, and moral poor, to lift up their heads in society, in all the consciousness of having an honourable part to perform, and in all the satisfaction of feeling that they perform it faithfully and effectually?

And I dwell on this usefulness, this indispensable, of the lower classes to the higher, because nowhere is it more practically exhibited and recognized than by that noble Corporation which I am now permitted to address. The rich and the poor, the illustrious and the mean, the scientific and the illiterate, are blended herein; but so blended, that every one is serviceable to every other. If ye have at your head the conqueror of his country's enemies, and the stay of her greatness; if men, who would have been distinguished by their birth, had not such distinction been forgotten in that of their deeds, enrol themselves in your list; if veterans in that service which has given England her supremacy, consecrate their experience to the perfecting your charts; if the astronomer be amongst you, to make the stars your ministers; the engineer, to plant ramparts against the ocean; the architect, to rear the lighthouse in defiance of the tempest; are ye

not, nevertheless, dependent on the poor and ignoble? Ye have devoted yourselves to the protection of navigation, that, under your auspices, commerce may go boldly forth, and sweep into our ports the riches of the earth; but of what avail were your pains, if the sailor could not be found to climb the mast, nor the pilot to seize the helm? Surely here again “the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”

And the finest point of view under which to survey this Corporation, is to regard it as centering its care and science on the destitute and lowly. It has an eye, an eye from whose glance of fire a world has recoiled; but that eye saith not to the hand, “I have no need of thee:” it anxiously watches the meanest mariner, and is ever on the look out, that he may be warned of his danger. It has a head, a head encircled with surpassing renown; but that head saith not to the feet, “I have no need of you:” it is occupied with caring for the poor cabin-boy, as recognizing his usefulness, and his claim to be remembered in his wanderings on the deep. For not only does this Corporation labour at the protection of the seaman, by lighting up the rocks which environ our island, and furnishing our ships with skilful pilots; it devotes much of its revenue to purposes of charity, to the maintenance of such structures for the aged and infirm as I have ventured to call bulwarks against the worst evils that can fall on a

land. And the most gratifying thing in this annual celebration, is not the pomp in which you descend yonder noble river, not the stateliness of ancient custom, not even the thrilling welcome with which thousands meet a venerated chieftain; it is rather the air of comfort, and of happiness, which distinguishes the inmates of your almshouses, the quiet thankfulness with which they come forwards, testifying that those who employed them in their strength succour and defend them in their decline.

And if the very structure of this Corporation thus make it furnish not only an illustration of the fact asserted in our text, but an example of that regard for inferior members which should be shown by the higher, we are bound to add that the honour hereby done to an inferior, should urge to faithfulness and diligence in duty. The hands and the feet should be unwearied in labour, when the eye and the head are thus unwearied in care. The pilots, for example, on whom so much depends, who have often property in their keeping, the loss of which would be the bankruptcy of cities, and lives whose destruction would fill a country with wailing, ought they not to feel that sobriety and fidelity, duties in every case, are doubly so in theirs, lest they fail in a trust received from so high an authority? Ignorant or drunken pilots are virtually as much the enemies of society as robbers and assassins: for are they not hands which would pluck out the eye, and feet which would run the head against the rocks? But ignorant

or drunken pilots, who have received their commission from the Trinity Board, whether they have imposed on that Board at first, or fallen afterwards into bad habits, are as robbers and assassins with every possible aggravation, — hands which would pluck out the eye when wakeful for their good, feet which would run the head against the rocks when occupied with kind thoughts for their safety and happiness.

We have drawn our illustrations, on the present occasion, from the usefulness of every member of the human body to every other; and we ought not to conclude without observing, that, as a day approaches when the body, with all its curious adaptations and symmetries, must lie down in the dust, no one member being exempt from the general decay, so is a time at hand when the mighty and the weak, the lofty and the low, must alike depart from the scene, so that the place which has known them shall know them no more. But there is to come a judgment according to works, a judgment on the body as well as on the soul. The judgment on the body may be a judgment of its several members, according as they shall have yielded themselves to the service of unrighteousness. Shall not the eye be judged, if it have been lit up with the fires of base passion? Shall not the head be judged, if it have employed itself on “science falsely so called?” Shall not the tongue, if it have given utterance to the scornfulness of the blasphemer, or the voluptuousness of

the sensualist? Shall not the hand, if it have held greedily the coveted wealth?

And, in like manner, the judgment on individuals shall take form and measure from their office and position upon earth. The great and illustrious shall be asked, whether they had sought to employ their high prerogatives on promoting God's glory and the kingdom of Christ. The wealthy shall be asked, whether they had regarded themselves as stewards, and used riches on the relief of the miserable and the instruction of the ignorant. The learned shall be asked, whether they had hallowed their science, by rendering it subservient to the making themselves and others "wise unto salvation." The poor shall be asked, whether they had borne poverty with contentment, and meekly struggled with those difficulties which God had been pleased to weave into their portion. Yea, and all shall be asked, what they have done with the soul, that precious deposit, which, redeemed at the inestimable cost of Christ's blood, may be, and is, flung away by thousands; by conquerors, who conquer all but themselves; scholars, who study every thing but themselves; preachers, who preach to every one but themselves; by multitudes, who care for every thing but the one thing needful, have time except for eternity, and room in the heart except for God.

Oh, that all might remember the strict and solemn account thus eventually to be rendered! The shipwreck of the soul! there is no language for

the expressing such catastrophe; seeing that to “lose the soul” is not to be deprived of the soul—this might comparatively be happiness; it is to retain possession of the soul, but the soul labouring under some awful denunciation: and to lose whilst we keep! there is something terrible in the very contradiction. It is total shipwreck; and yet the stately vessel rides the waters, in place of having foundered; holds fast her gallant trim, in place of being broken into shivers; lost, through being incapable of sinking; doomed to wander for ever on a shoreless sea, driven by a storm which knows no pause, through a night which has no morning.

But as yet this mysterious and fearful doom is not incurred by any amongst us. The soul may still be saved, saved by the old, saved by the young. Only take heed, that, whilst you rear the beacon, and map the channel, that the mariner may be guided to “the haven where he would be,” you keep the eye on Christ, “the true light,” and follow the directions of that Gospel which gives the soundings of the river of life; and to die shall be but to cast anchor by a happy shore—a new world, which, unlike the old, can neither disappoint nor disappear.

SERMON IV.¹

THE BLESSING IN THE CURSE².

GENESIS iii. 19.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

YOU have here a portion of the sentence pronounced upon Adam, because he had hearkened to his wife, and eaten the forbidden fruit. Sentence had already been passed upon the serpent and upon Eve; the serpent who had beguiled our common mother, and that mother herself, through whose disobedience we

¹ So comprehensive were the thoughts of our great masters in theology, that the following discourse is but the expansion of a single sentence of the admirable Barrow, who says of industry, “We were designed for it in our first happy state, and upon our lapse thence, were further doomed to it, as the sole remedy of our needs and the inconveniences to which we became exposed.”

² Preached before the Corporation of Trinity House, on Trinity Monday, 1844.

became mortal and miserable. Unto the serpent it was said, that upon his belly he should go, and dust should he eat all the days of his life,—a doom which must have referred rather to Satan, who had assumed the serpent's shape, than to the serpent itself, and which may have been accomplished in the abject condition of that fallen, though yet mighty spirit. Unto the woman it was announced that it should be in much pain and anguish she gave birth to her children,—an intimation in which, it may be, there was promise as well as threatening; for Eve had already heard of the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head; and she might now gather that, through much suffering, there would at last arise a Deliverer. And now must the man stand forward, and take his doom from the lips of his Maker. Amongst all the sentences, there is none which so marks the hateful character of sin, and its devastating power. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." So deadly a thing is evil, which thou hast been instrumental in introducing, that the very soil whereon thou treadest is thereby made barren. No longer shall the earth spontaneously yield thee her fruits; for henceforward thorns and thistles shall be its natural produce. "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life,"—thou must wring a hard subsistence from the reluctant field, in place of gathering an abundance which solicits thine acceptance. And there will be no termination to this toil, until the earth, which has almost refused thee

sustenance, shall give thee a grave. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Thou hast been formed from that ground; its dust has been compounded into thy limbs; and the curse is upon thy body, and upon all the material of which its members have been framed. The dust therefore must mingle with the dust,—“dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.”

Such was the sentence on our offending father, and on ourselves as having offended and fallen in him. And we need not tell you how faithfully the sentence has been executed. You know that, with few exceptions, and those, perhaps, more apparent than real, labour—painful and oppressive labour—is the lot of humankind; and that it is by some species or another of toil that every man gains his sufficiency of food. If you traverse the globe, you find every where, though not always in the same degree, the human race fighting against want, and the great majority of a population struggling with the earth for a miserable pittance. In some places there is greater luxuriance in the soil, in others greater sterility; but nowhere do you find that man eats bread except in the sweat of his face. From pole to pole, amid the snows of perpetual winter, and beneath the blazings of a tropical sun, there is but one cry and one strife,—the cry of millions for the means of subsistence, the strife with a ground on which rests God's curse, and which therefore yields nothing

until extorted from its womb. And thus is the history of our race little more than one vast evidence that we are the posterity of one whose disobedience spoiled the earth of its fruitfulness, and who, receiving in himself the sentence of labour, transmitted it, unexhausted and inexhaustible, to all after generations.

Yet if "mercy rejoiced against judgment" in the words uttered to the serpent and the woman, let us not hastily conclude that there was nothing of love in the sentence of which the man was the subject. We rather incline to believe that it was not wholly in anger and righteous severity that God made the cursing of the ground the punishment of Adam. We think that it will not be difficult to show that the Almighty was consulting for the good of his creatures when He thus made labour their inevitable lot. It was indeed in just indignation that He passed a stern sentence, which still rests as a heavy burden on ourselves. But it may have happened that He so shaped that sentence as to make it beneficial as well as punitive, and thus gave cause that we exclaim with David, in reference to this as to every other instance of his chastisement, "I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing."

It will be our endeavour to prove that this is the fact. We shall soon perceive that no subject could be more appropriate to the present occasion; but without anticipating the application, let us examine

into the mercy (for the judgment is sufficiently apparent) of that appointment of God which took much of its fruitfulness from the earth, and made toil the common heritage of man.

Now we need not limit our remarks to the single case of agriculture; for we may safely affirm that there is nothing worth man's attaining which he can attain without labour. It is not merely his bread which he wrings with hardship from the ground,—whatsoever the earth contains of precious and useful can only be obtained through being wrenched from its recesses, and is procured for us by the bone and the sinew of suffering humanity. And where man has not, in strict truth, to live by the sweat of his brow, he may have to live, which is far harder, by the sweat of his brain; intellectual food, even more than bodily, is only to be gathered by dint of unremitting toil. It is, therefore, the very character of the dispensation beneath which we are placed, that all must be labourers; and we may perhaps assume as universally conceded, that idleness is the fruitful parent of every kind of vice. But it follows from this, that the placing it in a man's power to be idle, the supplying him, that is, with the means of subsistence without exacting from him any labour, is simply the exposing him to the greatest possible peril, and the almost insuring his moral degeneracy. There are, indeed, frequent and noble exceptions to this statement. Many, whose circumstances preclude all necessity of toiling for a

liveliness, carve out for themselves paths of honourable industry, becoming the illustrious benefactors of a community through labours which their own wants would never have exacted. Such cases, however, prove nothing against our statement; they are not cases of idleness, but cases in which men, having the power to be idle, have felt the evil of such a state, and voluntarily submitted themselves to the ordinance of labour. The assertion as to the peril of idleness remains untouched; neither is any proof given that it would be safe to entrust the great mass of men with the power of being idle. And this is the single question, when the matter in debate is the mercy of that arrangement which took from the soil its first unbounded fruitfulness. Would the mass of men give themselves to honourable and praiseworthy occupations, if no necessity were laid on them by the wants of their nature?

The question may, in a great degree, be answered by a reference to cases in which the approach is the nearest to the supposed exemption from want. We look at countries in which the soil possesses the greatest fertility,—are their inhabitants the most distinguished by what is laudable and excellent? On the contrary, it may safely be affirmed, that where nature is most prodigal of her bounties, men make least advances in what ennobles a kingdom. There are districts of this globe on which the curse of barrenness has fallen so lightly, that they might almost be thought to have retained their original

fruitfulness. There is little or no demand on the labours of the husbandman: the mountains and the valleys stand thick with rich produce, and have scarcely asked the mattock or the ploughshare. But the inhabitants of these districts are, for the most part, sunk in the lowest degradation, and are far behind other nations in what is dignified and civilized. No where do you find more of hopeless suffering and abject penury—as though misery increased at the same rate as the means of its alleviation. If you would fix on a people presenting the finest spectacle of greatness, order, and intelligence, you must go to lands where there is a constant struggle for the material of subsistence,—where any approach towards universal idleness would be an approach towards universal destitution. There it is that civilization makes most rapid advances; there you find the most of a well-ordered and well-conditioned population. We wish that we could sketch to you what a change would be introduced into such a country as our own by a repeal of the sentence pronounced upon Adam. Let it be imagined that there was suddenly an end to all demands upon toil, so that our fields yielded, almost spontaneously, whatever was needed for the support of our population. We will not say that the whole social system would be instantly disorganized; for time might be required to overthrow confirmed habits of order and industry. But you cannot doubt that a vast and fatal revolution would be immediately com-

menced. You cannot doubt, that, among the lower orders especially, who are accustomed only to the bare necessaries of life, there are hundreds, thousands, who would prefer the bread of idleness to that of labour, whom nothing but the necessity of driving from their doors the stern aspect of famine keeps fast to any employment, and who would quickly, if there were the supposed inundation of plenty, cease from occupation and run riot in the abundance. And there would be no power in the upper classes of making head against the lawlessness and insubordination which would thus pervade all the lower, even if they caught nothing of the infection, but were themselves as desirous as before of carrying forward the engagements of industry. The moment that the poorer ranks had resolved on being idle, there would be an arrest on all the business of the higher; for such are the links in the social combination, that, in putting one part out of joint, you unhinge the whole system. And when you add the almost certainty, that the enervating effects of this change of comparative sterility for unbounded fruitfulness would extend themselves to every class which is required to labour, you cannot but allow, that there would be quickly a cessation of all commerce, and an end to all enterprize, and that the nation would soon present the inglorious spectacle of a mere stagnant humanity, ruffled only by the worst passions of our nature. We can imagine no other condition,—and we do not believe it would be

long ere it were reached,—than one in which all that is noble in legislature, and pure in theology, and lofty in morals, and splendid in intellect, and bold in enterprize, would be buried in one common grave. But if there be any truth in this description of the consequences of impregnating the soil of a land with the lost fertility of Paradise, will you not confess that it was with a distinct knowledge and forethought of what would suit a fallen race, that the Almighty pronounced the edict of barrenness? Oh, if ever you are tempted to repine that toil has been made the heritage of man, and that the great bulk of our species must wring from the earth a scant and precarious subsistence, we conjure you to observe how the well-being, perhaps almost the existence, of a community is dependent on the circulation through all its classes of a vigorous industry, and how, again, that industry is dependent on the sterility of the soil,—and then, when you see that the destroying the necessity for labour, by causing the ground to yield superfluity without toil, would be the destroying all that is venerable, and healthful, and dignified, and the reducing a people to the lowest level of mere animal being, you will be forced to allow, that, however harsh in sound, there was the fullest mercy, as well as the richest wisdom in the appointment, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.”

But are there any intimations in Scripture, that

the sentence upon Adam was designed to breathe mercy as well as judgment? We believe that, so soon as man fell, notices were graciously given of a deliverance to be effected in the fulness of time. It is hardly to be supposed that Adam would be left ignorant of what it so much concerned him to know; and the early institution of sacrifice seems sufficient to prove that he was taught a religion adapted to his circumstances. And Lamech, on naming his son Noah, which signifies "rest," exclaimed, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." He seems, that is, to have been made aware of the respects in which his son Noah would typify the Christ, taught that the curse upon the ground was but temporary, imposed for wise ends, until the final manifestation of a Redeemer, under whose sceptre the desert should rejoice and "blossom as a rose." But if so much were revealed to Lamech, it cannot be an overbold supposition that the same information was imparted to Adam. Thus may our first parent, compelled to till an earth on which rested the curse of its Creator, have known that there was blessing in store; and that, though he and his children must dig the ground in the sweat of their face, there would fall on it a sweat like great drops of blood, having virtue to remove the oppressive malediction. It must have been bitter to him to hear of the thorn and the thistle: but he may have learnt how thorns would be woven

into a crown, and placed round the forehead of One who should be as the lost tree of life to a dying creation. The curse upon the ground may have been regarded by him as a perpetual memorial of the fatal transgression and the promised salvation; reminding him of the sterility of his own heart, and the toil it would cost the Redeemer to reclaim that heart, and make it bring forth the fruits of righteousness; telling him, whilst pursuing his daily task, what internal husbandry was needful, and whose arm alone could break up the fallow ground — and thus Adam may have been comforted, as Lamech was comforted, by the Noah who was to bring rest to wearied humanity; and it may have been in hope as well as in contrition, in thankfulness as well as in sorrow, that he carried with him this sentence in his banishment from Paradise, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.”

We have not yet mentioned, though it is well worth the remark, that, had the earth yielded her fruit so abundantly as to leave no place for suffering and destitution, there would have been comparatively no call on man’s sympathies, but selfishness would have reigned with unlimited despotism. We must become as angels before we can be fitted to live in a world in which there is no want. Poverty and wretchedness serve to keep alive the best charities of our nature; and it were better for us, in a moral point of view, to live always in a hospital, or amid

the ravages of famine, than in a luxuriant land, where there were none to ask pity, and none to need succour. Here is one great end which we may believe to have been subserved by the substitution of sterility for fruitfulness in the soil. The poor are in the land, and cannot cease out of the land whilst the earth remains under the original curse. And thus, by presenting perpetual occasions for the exercise of brotherly love, God has done the utmost to provide against that induration of heart, that contraction of feeling, and that centering of all one's thoughts in one's self, which are amongst the worst symptoms of moral degeneracy, and the worst earnest of final condemnation. The ordinance that in the sweat of his face must man eat bread, secures a continual succession of objects of sympathy, leaving selfishness without excuse, inasmuch as those who suffer least from the curse are solicited on all sides to show compassion to those who suffer more.

And here it should be observed, in strict connexion with our subject of discourse, that there is falseness in the very common opinion which would make labour altogether the result of sin, as though, if men had never fallen, they would have had no need of industry. It is true, that whatsoever there be of painful in labour, should be ascribed to sin, and would not have existed had the world continued innocent. But labour itself was the ordinance of God whilst man was in Paradise. That beautiful garden, over which there had yet passed no blight,

required to be dressed, and Adam was directed to till and to keep it. No doubt the soil, not yet stricken by the curse of its Maker, would not ask the sweat of man's face before it yielded him bread; but neither was the corn to spring spontaneously forth; it demanded culture, and so forbade idleness. The curse provoked by disobedience was not the curse of labour, but the curse of painful labour: "in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." It is not, then, in his fallen state alone, that industry is required of man; it may more properly be said to be the law imposed upon every creature; so that of whatsoever God hath made in earth, sea, and air, He hath made nothing to be idle. Employment in some shape or another would seem appointed to every living thing; the highest of Heaven's angels has his duties to fulfil, and the meanest of earth's insects must be busy or perish. Even the inanimate creation, as some of the old Fathers have observed, may be said to preach to us against idleness, and to represent to us its ruinous effects. "All nature is upheld in its being, order, and state, by constant agitation;" it is the running water which keeps fresh, the air fanned by winds which is wholesome, the metal that is in use which does not rust. And, therefore, according to the whole drift of our discourse, though the amount and character of the labour required from man have been greatly changed through the entrance of sin, there can be no question that there was more of blessing than of curse in the

edict which took the first fruitfulness from the ground. There has been hence imposed upon the world a general necessity for industry; and in a world corrupted by sin, it could not, we argue, have safely been left optional with men whether or not they would work; their own welfare demanded that industry should be indispensable to the warding off starvation. We find, then, in the appointment announced by our text, extraordinary evidence of the wisdom and goodness of God: man's due place in creation was only to be preserved through the surrounding with difficulties the preservation of life; and the readiest way of sinking him to the level of the brute, would have been the supplying his wants in the same way as those of the brute are supplied. Nor are other considerations wanting which lead to the same conclusion. It is industry alone which will preserve any thing like a healthful contentment in our spirits; the unemployed man is always dissatisfied and restless: time is a burden: after all, he is forced to be industrious, industrious in squandering what he will live to regret his not improving. Indeed, he labours most who labours least; the man who seeks only ease should seek it through labour: for "sloth, which hateth labour and trouble, doth by hating, incur them." God has so constituted us, that the being occupied dissipates dull humours from the mind, keeps the various faculties in vigorous play, and, even if it exhaust us, brings sweet and undisturbed repose. Industry, moreover, is

ordinarily followed by rewards; the industrious are seldom baffled in their pursuits; they are generally the men who attain the greatest measure of what passes as desirable; and when wealth or honour flows in upon a man, through God's blessing on his industry, it is incomparably sweeter to him than if he had derived it from another—the treasure which himself hath acquired, is vastly more precious than if ancestors had bequeathed it; the nobility, achieved by his own actions, immeasurably more gratifying, than if it had descended through a long line of peers.

And whilst so much may be said on the advantages of industry—on the blessing which is hidden in the curse of our text—there are not wanting examples and patterns to urge to the culture of this virtue, the parent, as we might call it, of every other, or, indeed, a main ingredient in every other. Turn where you will, and all is industry: look into the histories of the illustrious, and all is industry. That God blessed man in cursing the ground, this seems breathed from things animate and inanimate, from the highest orders of being and from the lowest, from priests, and apostles, and sages, and heroes, yea, from the Redeemer, from the Divinity himself. Harken to the voice of the unwearied sun, who, day by day, cometh forth from his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. Harken to the speech of the waters in their ceaseless rise and fall, to the language of nature in all her labora-

tories, in all her processes. Listen for a message from angels, who rest not day nor night, singing the praises, and executing the commandments of their Maker. And then shut not the ear to the eloquence of example ; but suffer yourselves to be addressed by Him who “never slumbereth, nor sleepeth,” by Him again “who went about doing good,” by those who were “instant in season, out of season,” by the excellent, the illustrious, whether of the past or of the present. What is the universal call? what the lesson, for the syllabing of which the whole system and order of creation appears to have grown vocal, which the speechless articulate, the silent publish, the dead preach? Ah! there are no words which find more utterances, none which may be more distinctly heard, by the ear of reason, from every planet in its everlasting march, from every process of vegetation, from every spirit before God’s throne, from every insect as it walks its little span, and from every sepulchre which holds the dust of the good, than those which recommend and inculcate industry—but words which praise industry, prove that God was appointing a blessing, though in the form of a curse, when He said to our first parent, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.”

And if you search for an apt exhibition of assiduous and successful industry, you have it in that noble Corporation whose representatives are now assembled in this place. The edict which took its first fruitfulness from the soil, left one land in pos-

session of one produce, another of another. What mercy, then, was mingled with the judgment! If every land had produced the same things, and with the same ease, there would have been no scope for commerce; and without commerce, the different tribes of men would have had little or no intercourse: strangers to each other, if not enemies, they would have known nothing of the bond of universal brotherhood. So then commerce, with all its humanizing tendencies—for they are vastly mistaken who regard commerce as the mere machine of avarice and luxury—it may subserve the noblest purposes, circumnavigating the globe to diffuse every where kindly sentiments, the precious truths of science, the immeasurably more precious of Christianity—commerce, then, with all its humanizing tendencies, has sprung from that cursing of the ground which is recorded in our text. But what industry is needed for the successful prosecution of commerce! What mighty results have sprung from man's being doomed to eat bread in the sweat of his face! The stately ship, the sublime searchings of astronomy, the triumphs of the engineer in the lighthouse and the chart, the mastery of the elements, the creation of a new power which may be almost said to bridle the winds and waves, and make man supreme on the deep as on the land—all are to be traced to that sentence upon Adam, of which some would complain as breathing only wrath.

And the Corporation here assembled, is but the

embodying of these various achievements of industry. Under the headship of one whose unweariedness in labour has been, and is, his country's safeguard, this Corporation spreads its shield over commerce. The chart, the beacon, the buoy, the pilot, it is assiduous in providing all these, that the mariner may have every possible aid in prosecuting his adventurous course. Long may it continue its beneficent labours. If it seem strange that a Corporation such as this, combining the illustrious by deed, the noble by birth, the foremost in trade, the lofty in science, should have actually arisen from the malediction on the earth when its days were yet few, at least let us admire the Providence of God which hath overruled for good what bore the air of unmingled disaster ; let us pray that navigation may continue to receive this fostering care, till its noblest ends shall have all been fulfilled, till, in the old age of the world, ships shall have borne to every land the glad tidings of the Gospel, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas."

The great lesson, then, which we learn from the text is, that industry is honourable and beneficial ; that the Almighty was blessing us when He made labour our inheritance. Let all apply the lesson, ceasing to repine where we ought rather to be grateful, and determining to be more diligent than ever in performing the duties allotted us by God. Even this Corporation may take the lesson. It has but to relax its industry, and a navy may perish.

If it were to grow remiss in its high functions, the sunken rocks, the treacherous quicksands, would soon be the scenes of frightful tragedies; or those worse foes to seamen than rocks or quicksands—ignorant or drunken pilots—yes, let pilots hear that; worse are they than the rock, worse than the quicksand, if they be ignorant or drunken—these would soon multiply, and make playthings of the life and property of thousands.

But we have no fears that this Corporation will relax in its industry. Let us rather, in conclusion, speak of the industry required from all in their spiritual capacity, as Christians, as candidates for the kingdom of heaven. It is not the representation of Scripture, however it may be the imagination of numbers, that religion is an easy thing, so that immortality may be secured with no great effort on the part of the sinner. The Christian life is likened to a battle in which we may be defeated, to a race in which we may be outstripped, to a stewardship in which we may be unfaithful. Who indeed, that thinks for a moment on the virtues required from us as Christians,—charity, temperance, meekness, patience, humility, contentment,—will imagine that a believer may be idle, finding nothing in his spiritual calling to exercise diligence? These virtues, we may venture to say, are all against nature, only to be acquired through strife with ourselves, and preserved by constant war. And though Divine grace alone can enable us whether to acquire or

preserve, it does not supersede our own efforts; it makes those efforts effectual, but never works in us but by and through ourselves.

Be then industrious in religion: we can tolerate indolence any where rather than here,—here where Eternity is at stake,—here where an hour's sluggishness may be fatal. We have no respect, indeed, for the indolent man, let his indolence show itself in what form it may. One of your idlers, who sleeps away life, doing listlessly what he is compelled to do, and only pleased when he can be left undisturbed, hardly deserves the name of man,—man's characteristic is restlessness; restlessness foretels his immortality; and the sluggard, by his apathy, seems to destroy the mark, and silence the prophecy. But, if contemptible in other things, indolence may not be actually fatal: the indolent man may have wealth which secures him against want; and by the occasional exercise of rare talents, he may, even in spite of habitual sluggishness, attain to some measure of distinction. But an indolent Christian,—it is a sort of contradiction; Christianity is industry spiritualized: the sluggard in religion would be a sluggard in escaping from the burning house, or the sinking ship,—but who ever loitered when death was at his heels?

Let us work, then, “while it is called to-day;” “the night cometh when no man can work.” The sentence of our text has gone forth, and all must submit, “dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt

return." There is no exemption for greatness, none for goodness. The path of glory, the path of science, the path of usefulness, all alike terminate in the grave. The time is at hand when all of us, though widely separated in earthly circumstances, must lie down together in the dust. But if dust we are, and unto dust we must return, immortal also we are, and over us death hath no abiding power. We will not, then, repine that sin hath brought death into the world; we will rejoice that Christ hath brought "life and immortality to light by his Gospel." Shipwrecked we must be: life is but a voyage, and every barque sinks at last, a broken and dislocated thing. But we have but to steer by the chart of the Gospel, and take as our pole-star the Redeemer, which is Christ, and the shattered vessels shall yet be found floating in the haven where we would be: body and soul are reserved alike for glorious destiny; the corruptible shall put on incorruption, the mortal immortality.

SERMON V.¹

THE SHIPWRECK.

JONAH i. 4, 5.

“ But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship ; and he lay, and was fast asleep.”

You will probably all remember how it came to pass that Jonah was brought into these perilous circumstances. In his character of a prophet, he had received directions from God to hasten to Nineveh, and to announce the near ruin of that mighty and idolatrous capital. But Jonah probably thought that he should be treated with insult, if not put to death, by the Ninevites : he, therefore, resolved to disobey, and, embarking in a ship bound for Tarshish,

¹ Preached before the Corporation of Trinity House, on Trinity Monday, 1846.

directed his course to the opposite quarter from that enjoined him by God. But God had his eye on his rebellious servant, and would not suffer him to proceed undisturbed in transgression. Lord as He is of the elements, so that He “bringeth the wind out of his treasures,” He could raise a sudden and mighty tempest, and thus effectually intercept the disobedient Prophet. And this, we read, He did; the storm which overtook the vessel being evidently of no ordinary kind, but such as forced the mariners to a conviction, that, from some cause or another, the anger of an incensed Deity pursued them.

Now if it were in the power of circumstances to make men religious, there is no class of persons with whom we might expect to find more of piety than with mariners, those who “go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters.” Well might the Psalmist say, and the hearts of many in this assembly can respond to the words, “These men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.” There is no portion of the globe so wonderful in its manifestation of divinity as the ocean. Whether it sleep beautifully in the tranquillities of an unbroken calm, or be wrought by the hurricane into madness, it is a more stupendous object, wakening sublimer thoughts, and prompting to loftier musings, than the most glorious combination of valley and mountain.

If, then, any part of this creation is to bring men into acquaintance with the Creator, to teach them

his greatness and awfulness, and to prevail with them to inquire how his favour may be gained, it must, we should think, be the sea: to that page may natural theology best point, when it would show characters which publish God's might; to that mirror may it best look, when it would catch the reflection of an invisible Ruler. But it is comparatively little that the waters of the great deep thus preach of a Divinity; it is not difficult for the human mind to close itself against the strongest notices which creation can give of a Creator. Consider, then, for a moment, the dangers of the sea, the perils which encompass those who live upon its surges—dangers and perils not always to be escaped, even where the noble Corporation before which I speak, has lighted its beacons, and fastened its buoys. Well, again, hath the Psalmist said, "They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end." The life of the sailor is a life of constant risk. He cannot reckon for an hour on the security of the frail vessel in which he is embarked: the sky, now serene, may be overcast with clouds; the tempest may be upon him, as a giant in his fury; and in spite of his courage and seamanship, he may be thrown as a plaything to the waves, his ship rent into a thousand shreds, and himself and all his comrades struggling vainly with death.

But though it be thus certain that the ocean is

wondrously adapted, both by its magnificence and dangers, to lead those conversant with it to a knowledge and fear of their Creator, is it not the fact that there is, at least, as little of seriousness of thought, and of preparation for death, in men whose business is on the waters, as in others who have no such marvels to behold, and no such perils to encounter? Without designing to charge a special want of religion on any one class of men, we may say of sailors generally, that they are striking illustrations of the powerlessness of circumstances to make men religious; for conversant as they are with what is grandest in the workmanship of God, and almost momentarily in evident jeopardy of their lives, they are not, perhaps, as a body, more mindful of their Maker, nor more provident for eternity, than if there were nothing in their condition to induce devotional habits. If there were any scene on which natural religion might be expected to win a triumph, any individual whom it might be expected to subdue, that scene, undoubtedly, is the ocean, when tossing its billows to the sky, and that individual is the mariner whom it threatens to overwhelm. But the general habits of a seafaring population prove the inefficiency of natural religion, of that religion which has nothing but the volume of creation for its Bible, and nothing but conscience for its preacher. The ocean itself does not practically reveal a God to those best acquainted with its wonders, and conscience itself does not work true repentance in those

most scared by its terrors. In vain doth Deity glass, as it were, his eternity in the vast mirror of the waters: in vain doth He come riding, magnificently but terribly, on the whirlwind: the mariner can look on the waves in their gloriousness, and be menaced by them in their fury, and, nevertheless, remain in utter ignorance of God, or open defiance of his laws.

The crew of the ship in which Jonah sailed, may be referred to in evidence of this. They were a crew of idolaters, every man, apparently, having a different deity; for you observe that it is said in our text, "The mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god." They were not deficient in courage or seamanship: they took vigorous measures for their safety, forgetting, when life was in danger, what was, perhaps, only second to it in their esteem, and casting away their cargo that the vessel might be lightened. But in their applications to an invisible power, they betrayed all the absurdities of the very worst idolatry; for every man had his own god to address, so that there was nothing less than a Babel of worship. It was not, of course, in this moment of fear and perplexity that the several individuals imagined or selected a deity. They had, probably, been idolaters from their youth; and now that they seemed given over to death, each had nothing better to do than cry to that fabulous being, which, from some cause or another, he had chosen as his own. But if ever the ocean was to have given

back to those who sailed upon its bosom the image of the one true God, might it not have been expected to have done so to men who each worshipped a different divinity? for what could be a greater practical demonstration to them that their religion was false, than that they all disagreed as to who God was? and if their religion was false, if their deities were deceits, what more to have been looked for than that they should have sought afresh for the invisible, but Omnipotent Being, who “holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand,” and “hath his way in the whirlwind and the storm?” But no—they voyaged together over the mighty expanse; they had evidence of the falseness of their religion forced on them by its diversity; the waters continually preached to them of God, preached to them in the calm and in the tempest: but so practically powerless is natural religion, even under the most favourable circumstances, that, when they came into danger, and had to appeal to Deity to shield them from death, they were still found to be idolaters, idolaters who stood self-convicted of the folly of idolatry.

And if all this be true, if, notwithstanding the magnificent imagery of God which is continually around him, and the perils by which he is encompassed, the sailor is apt to think little of the duties of religion, how important, how unspeakably important, the office of that Corporation in whose presence I speak! It is not merely property of which you

are the guardians—though commerce may be said to commit its treasures to your care; nay, it is not merely life—though your lighthouses, your charts, and your pilots, preserve, under God, the thousands who navigate our intricate channels; it is immortality itself, over which you keep watch. It is the soul for which burns that lonely spark, in the darkest night and amid the fiercest storm. You guard the seaman in his years of carelessness, and perhaps even profligacy, that opportunity may be granted him (O God, grant that it be not given in vain!) of yet avoiding that last shipwreck, when the sensual, and the careless, and the proud, shall be broken by the breath of the Almighty's displeasure.

But it is time that we pass from considering what relates to the conduct of the crew, to the examining what is told us of Jonah, in this hour of imminent peril. Jonah had, perhaps, more cause than any other in the vessel to be disturbed, and filled with apprehension by the storm; and we might have expected to find him the most earnest in crying for deliverance. Yet, strange to say, he was “gone down into the sides of the ship, and was fast asleep,” so that the shipmaster had roughly to awaken him, in order to make him sensible of the danger. A singular contrast—he, a worshipper of the true God, though actually endeavouring to flee from his presence, manifested utter insensibility in perilous circumstances; whilst even idolaters, who were not, perhaps, at the time chargeable with extraordinary sin, did all

that a false religion could teach them, and sought help from invisible powers. And was it not the severest rebuke which could have been administered to a servant of Jehovah, that a heathen, an idolater, should rouse him from his sleep, and urge upon him the duty of making supplications to his god? If another of the servants of the true God had come to him, and addressed him in the startling terms, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God," the rebuke would have been comparatively nothing, though even then full of just bitterness. But that one who knew no religion but a false should summon to duty, and reprove for its neglect, a man instructed in truth, and professedly dedicated to the service of the one living God,—this indeed was severe and stern upbraiding; if any thing could make Jonah feel, it must have been, we think, the being thus addressed by a Pagan.

And are we to draw no lesson from this part of the narrative? Is there nothing uttered in the present day, analogous to the remonstrance of the shipmaster, by the heathen to Christians? We never question (who can justly question?) that the zeal with which Pagans serve their idols, and the readiness with which they often submit to the austerities prescribed by superstition, will rise up hereafter in judgment against multitudes in a Christian land, who neglect the true God, though clearly revealed, and shrink from his service, though that service is freedom. The very heathen put us to

shame, for they will manifest a most devoted earnestness in what they count religious duties, and will be actually unwearied in their endeavours to propitiate the unknown powers whom they suppose the arbiters of their fate; whilst we, blessed with ample discoveries of the Ruler of the universe, and taught the only method of gaining his favour, are apt to count the least sacrifice excessive, and to display no result of the being emancipated from superstition, but the being indifferent to religion.

“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” It is no unfair inference, from the assiduousness with which the heathen will often act up to their scanty measure of light, that, had they been privileged with a greater, with the measure, for example, vouchsafed to ourselves, they would have far exceeded us in obedience, in the performance of those duties which Revelation makes obligatory on those blessed with its beams. Assuredly, then, there will be no need of other witnesses against us, in order to ensure an aggravated condemnation, if from the islands and continents of the earth, on which there has not shined the light of the Gospel, there is to issue a throng, whose actions will be evidence, that more had been done where only little had been given, than where God had been largest in discovery and assistance. Will it not suffice to

make the Christian, who has failed to improve his superior advantages, shrink away in the consciousness that he must have to bear a sentence of unusual severity, if there be arrayed against him the eminent of the heathen, men who sought painfully and incessantly for truth, amid the mysterious shadows with which they were encompassed, and who were willing to endure any hardship, or attempt any duty, which they thought prescribed by the deities in whose existence they believed?

It is in this way, and without any forced attempt at instituting a parallel, that we may regard the heathen as acting towards Christians the very part of the shipmaster towards Jonah. Why may we not liken the whole globe to a vessel tossing on a stormy sea? for is there a solitary one, amongst all its inhabitants, who is not in danger of shipwreck; embarked on dark waters, and carried on by a resistless current, towards an unknown shore, where, but too probably, he may be a castaway for eternity? And may we not say of the crew of this mighty ship, that every man has his god, there being, as St. Paul hath said, "gods many, and lords many," though there be, in reality, but one Creator and Ruler, and "one Mediator between God and man?" But who, of all the mariners, are most assiduous in their endeavours to get safe to land? Are the worshippers of the true God conspicuous above the worshippers of idols, by their fervency in prayer, by their strenuousness of effort? May they be distin-

guished by the greater sense which they manifest of exposure to danger, and by their greater diligence in using all such means of deliverance as have been furnished them from above? On the contrary, are not thousands of them sunk in the deepest moral apathy, engrossed with petty concerns, caring apparently for nothing but perishable good, though momentarily in danger of being plunged headlong into the waves? And are there not, on the other hand, many of the slaves of idolatry, who are striving, might and main, to turn from them the anger of some imagined divinity, wearying Heaven with petitions, and wearing themselves down with toils, so as not only to reprove the indolent and careless of a Christian community, but even to admonish the most earnest to take heed that they be not outdone in diligence?

But if it be true, that, as the vast vessel rises and falls on the boisterous surges, there are found amongst its crew the heathen, who are praying and struggling for deliverance, and the Christians, who are supine and insensible to danger, what, we ask of you, are the one but the idolatrous shipmaster, what the other but the Prophet of God? the shipmaster doing all that his seamanship, and his knowledge of a supreme Being, could suggest; the prophet buried in deep slumber, and without care for the peril. As there are borne to the Christian, in his sluggishness and neglect of many privileges, tidings how the heathen will lacerate the limbs, and dare bravely

long penance, in hopes of shunning the danger of which he seems to make no account, what is to be said, if not that the shipmaster is again upon Jonah, fast asleep in the side of the vessel, and crying to him in a voice whose echoes will be heard amid all the stir of final judgment, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, and call upon thy God?" Need we do what the mariners did, have recourse to the lot, in order to determine the guilty party? We suspect not. The character is of such common occurrence, that perhaps many in the present assembly may be conscious of the likeness. After all their entreaty, and all their remonstrance, the ministers of Christ are still forced to believe, that if they go down to the sides of the ship, they shall find many fast locked in sleep, requiring to be addressed in the rough words of the shipmaster, though, alas! by no means sure to be roused by the summons. We must search them out: for, like Jonah, they may not be on the deck where every one can observe them; and we must say to them individually, "What meanest thou, O sleeper?"

What means the man of the world, sleeping the sleep of pleasure? What means the lover of wealth, stupified by his gold? What means the man of ambition, dreaming of worthless honours? What mean they by slumbering? Know they not that the ship has sprung a leak; that the tempest is so fierce that she is driven to and fro, a mere straw upon the waters, the masts shivered, the rudder

broken? And can they sleep? sleep amid the tumult of the elements? sleep, when in another moment they may be in the eddies of the whirlpool?

And do they wonder at Jonah? do they marvel that he could remain in profound slumber, whilst the winds were howling, and the waves boiling? It is their own case. The conscience of Jonah was drugged, was lethargic—otherwise he would have been upon the deck, praying, struggling for deliverance; and conscience with these men has had an opiate,—otherwise should we see them casting out their wares, laying aside, as the Apostle saith, “every weight,” using every art, and applying every engine, that they might yet reach the haven of everlasting life. The shipmaster did not call upon the prophet to use his own strength and skill in saving the vessel, but only to be earnest in imploring help from above. “Arise, call upon thy God.” The case, on all human calculation, was desperate. Every thing had been done which a bold crew could effect, but all in vain; and now, unless God speedily interposed, the vessel must go down, and all on board perish. It is the same in our own day. It is the same, for example, with the actual mariner—the lighthouse shows the rock, the pilot is at the helm, the chart is consulted, courage has done its utmost; but unless He, of whom it is said, “The sea is his, and he made it,” come to the aid of the gallant fellows, alas! alas! the merciless tempest

must soon sweep them all into one deep grave. The sailor must look, must pray, to the "holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity," whilst he uses all the means, and exhausts all the resources, provided or prescribed by the noble Corporation, which, as taking its name from that Trinity, throws a sacredness round its efforts to shield human life. But the case is also the same morally with all of you. If we summon you to prayer, it is not to prayer unaccompanied with effort. We bid you pray; but we expect that, along with prayer, there will be strenuous exertion, the bending of every power, the strain of every muscle, the surrender of every incumbering possession, that the ship may be lightened, and ride out the storm. Prayer is valuable, prayer is sincere, only as it is attended by diligence in the use of every known means. With the consciousness that he cannot save himself, man is to act as if he could; throwing out the earthly cargo, lashing the rudder, sounding the waters; but withal, committing himself unreservedly to Christ, who alone can say to the turbid elements, "Peace, be still," and bring him to the "haven where he would be."

And who can think for a moment of the shipwreck of death, and not long to have Christ with him in the vessel? It must come, that dark and disastrous hour, when the timbers of the ship shall be loosened, and a tempest, not to be withstood, shall hurry her towards the shore of the invisible world. What is

then to become of the slumberers, of those who are not to be roused by the call of the shipmaster? They must wake, if not while the vessel is being tossed and shattered, yet so soon as she lies a wreck upon the strand. But to wake with the consciousness that they can never sleep again; to wake only to behold themselves lost, lost beyond power of recovery, lost for eternity! O God, we cannot imagine that wakening; save Thou us from knowing it by experience!

How different the closing scene of those who are aware of moral peril, and seeking safety in Christ! They, too, must be wrecked. There is no exemption from this; all who have voyaged on the waters of life must submit to the vessel being broken up by death. And we know not how this final dislocation will be effected; whether by a gentle or a severe process; whether the vessel shall be cast upon rocks, and beaten to pieces by the storm, or whether she shall sink, as ships have sunk, whilst the sea is as glass, and the sky without a cloud. But whether the shipwreck occur in the hurricane or in the calm, the soul will spring safely to the shore, which she hath long looked to as her rest. And when a new morning breaks, as break it shall, on this long-darkened creation, the very fragments of the shattered vessels shall all be collected; the navy which had been rent into shreds, shall be splendidly rebuilt; and the Church of the Redeemer, composed

of glorified souls in glorified bodies, shall be found resting tranquilly in that promised home, where “the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.”

SERMON VI.¹

ANGELS REJOICING IN THE GOSPEL.

ST. LUKE ii. 13, 14.

“And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.”

THE service of this day must be regarded as one of the most solemn and imposing in which men can engage. A building has been consecrated to God, set apart, by one invested with apostolic authority, for the ministrations of the Christian religion. From the earliest times, the Almighty required that places or structures should be thus appropriated to his service. There is, indeed, a sense in which the Creator dwelleth not in temples made with hands. We may regard the universe, in the immenseness of

¹ Preached at the consecration of the church of St. John the Evangelist, Brighton.

its spreadings, as one magnificent cathedral, whose aisles, rich with the tracery of stars and planets, are every where inhabited by Deity. But nevertheless it has appeared from the first, that certain niches, so to speak, in this infinite edifice were peculiarly to be consecrated to God, so that, if the whole creation were holy, there might be spots in it which should each serve as a "holy of holies." We find the patriarchs were accustomed to rear altars, hallowing the scenes where they called on the name of the Lord. We know that, when Israel wandered through the wilderness—the pillar of cloud his guide by day, and the pillar of fire by night—God required that a tabernacle should be reared with costly and curious skill, condescending even to inspire the artificers with wisdom, that the workmanship might be unequalled in beauty. And who can forget, that, when the land of promise was gained, and God had given to the chosen seed rest from their enemies, the blood on David's hands, though it was that of the Lord's foes, deprived this righteous monarch of the honour of rearing a temple,—God hereby showing that the work was so holy and august, that not even the appearance of pollution could be tolerated in those who were employed thereupon? The honour was reserved for Solomon, a prince upon whom God had bestowed such rare endowments, and whom He had exalted by such a concurrence of prosperous events, that it would seem, says an old divine, "as if God had made it his business to build a Solomon, in order that Solomon

might build Him an house." The work was completed; and, almost burdened with the riches of the earth, the temple of Jerusalem soared above the city, the splendid triumph of architecture. Then it was that a demonstration, never to be forgotten, was given of the favour with which God regards places devoted to his worship. The monarch stood on a scaffold of burnished brass, and round him were gathered the princes and nobles of the land. The congregation of Israel had assembled as one man at the bidding of their king, and sheep and oxen were sacrificed which could not be told nor numbered for multitude. The Levites, clothed in white linen, stood at the east end of the altar, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps; and with them an hundred and twenty priests, sounding with trumpets. And it came to pass, that, whilst the firmament rang with the music of these divers instruments, and the voices of the singers rose high in God's praise, there descended majestically a cloud of glory: the Almighty took possession of his house with such overpowering tokens of approval, that the priests shrank back, as though withered by the brilliant manifestation, and "could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud."

There ought never after this to be question, that "God loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." And when, in addition to the proofs furnished by what took place under introductory dispensations, we can adduce the uniform practice of the Christian Church from apostolic days down-

ward, we feel that the solemn ceremonies of this morning have so high a vindication, that it were worse than superfluous to discourse on their propriety. To God, then, and to his service, has this building been devoted. Henceforward it is to be stately used for public worship, the preaching of the Gospel, and the administering of the Christian sacraments. And I know not that I could select a more appropriate subject for the first sermon delivered within these walls, than that presented by our text. Let us take angels for our pattern in commencing, as it were, the proclamations of the Gospel: the words which the birth of Christ drew from these lofty intelligences, must be specially adapted for the opening announcement of the great scheme of redemption.

These words naturally divide themselves into two parts,—the one, a demand of praise to God from the highest orders of being; the other, a statement of the reason why this praise should be given. Or we may say, with no great variation from this account of the doxology, that the incarnation, with its consequences, is here represented as a fresh cause why angels should glorify God; whilst the work, which the new-born babe will achieve, is described as “peace on earth,” or “good-will towards men.” We shall observe this division in arranging the remainder of our discourse, trusting that, after expounding to you the angelic account of that Gospel, for the propagation of which this house has been reared,

there will be little need for any lengthened remarks on the duty of assisting in providing churches for a rapidly increasing population. Our first topic, then, will be, the motive to the glorifying God, which the incarnation furnished to angels; the second, the accuracy of the description of redemption, that it is "peace on earth," or "good-will towards men."

Now we may fairly doubt, whether up to the time of Christ's birth, angels had been made thoroughly acquainted with the plan of our redemption. The cherubim, who bended over the ark, full as it was of solemn and typical mysteries, seemed to denote by their attitude—an attitude to which St. Peter refers when saying, "which things the angels desire to look into,"—that God had given to them, as to mankind, only obscure intimations of his great purpose of mercy. Since, moreover, St. Paul speaks of the manifold wisdom of God as now made known by the Church unto the powers and principalities in heavenly places, we seem warranted in supposing that it was not until the eternal Son had actually entered on his awful undertaking, that its nature was fully revealed even to the highest created intelligence. Then, it may be, it burst at once on the angel and the archangel, so that the incarnation was to them the discovery of the long-hidden secret. It was enough for them to know that Deity had mysteriously united itself to humanity, and the problem was solved on which they had hopelessly bent all the might of their

intellect. They had, then, that element in the stupendous calculation, which, left to themselves, they could never have introduced, but which, once furnished, made comparatively easy the ascertaining all the rest. So that the moment in which the Mediator was born, would be to them the moment of immense discovery; and we might expect to find it one of loud ascriptions of praise. And forasmuch as the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God comprehend all his attributes, and to acknowledge these is to give Him glory, we have only to examine whether these were not singularly manifested to angels in the incarnation of Christ, and you will understand why that event caused the heavenly beings to glorify God.

We begin with wisdom; and shall we hesitate to say of the scheme of our redemption—a scheme, you observe, all whose parts were thrown open at once to angels by the incarnation—that it is the mightiest display ever put forth of this divine property? Here was a province of God's empire, that had thrown off its allegiance,—a province on which He had shed profusely the rich and the beautiful, which He had given to creatures fashioned after his own image, on whose faculties there was no bias to make them swerve from obedience, and on whom He imposed the gentlest trial as preparatory to admission to still higher enjoyments. And when these creatures, in spite of every advantage thus liberally imparted, yielded at once to the suggestions of evil, there

seemed to remain nothing but final separation from God, nothing but that this globe, if still left to trace her orbit, should trace it as a wrecked and depopulated thing, preaching to other stars the fearfulness of disobedience. And it was with the problem of restoring this earth without dishonouring its Maker, that finite wisdom was quite unable to cope. But infinite wisdom arranged a plan, which made man's rescue not only consistent with the honour of God, but a source of the greatest revenue of glory. And, in arranging this plan, wisdom was required to undertake the guardianship of every other perfection: she must set herself to the task of preserving justice inviolate, and holiness immaculate, and truth uncompromised; and yet of allowing love to go forth to the succour of transgressors. So that, whilst the remaining properties of Godhead might shroud themselves, each in its own dignities and claims, wisdom must be occupied in embracing them all within the range of her device, manifesting herself by upholding the rest.

What then shall be said of the incarnation, but that it overpoweringly exhibited to angels the wisdom of their Maker? No sooner had the Godhead joined itself to the manhood, than the mystery, which had been hid for ages in the Eternal Mind, brake forth, splendid with the coruscations of wisdom, and "a wave of delighted sensibility" must have gone down the ranks of the heavenly hosts; and no marvel that, with one accord, they should have sent up such an

anthem, that shepherds, on the plains of Bethlehem, caught its echo. It was not so much the display of love which moved them; for they knew, long before, that infinite love had induced God to plan man's redemption. It was not the display of justice; for in their own debates they must have computed on a justice which could not pass by iniquity. It was not the display of holiness; for it would have been to undeify Deity, to suppose Him capable of admitting the impure into communion with Himself. It must have been the wisdom which chiefly amazed them; the manifold wisdom—manifold, for it had reconciled every opposing interest; it had provided for every possible emergency; it had left no point neglected, either in the attributes of the Creator, or the necessities of the creature—this wisdom, manifested in that process of rescue, which stood developed before them in the Word being made flesh, must have filled with new ecstasy the angelic company; yea, must have introduced such a new epoch, as it were, in the heavenly annals, that, as though there had heretofore been silence in the majestic temple of the skies, and no ascriptions of praise had proceeded from that throng who moved in the light of God's immediate presence, we might expect that one rank would call to another, even as they did in the hearing of the amazed and almost terrified Isaiah, and that angel to archangel, principality to power, Cherubim to Seraphim, would roll the summons, "Gloria in excelsis Deo, Glory, glory to God in the highest"

But if the manifestation of wisdom must have been specially that which called forth the celestial song, there were, we doubt not, notes in that song which were wakened by the manifestation of power. It showed Omnipotence at least as much to create man the second time as the first. To rebuild what sin had thrown down was as mighty an act as to speak it out of nothingness. We should rather say mightier. It cost God nothing to create an universe: "he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." But it cost him the gift of his own Son—who shall measure it?—to redeem a single planet. We know not how to express to you what we think of the power displayed in the work of our redemption. It is possible that this attribute of God is not so generally recognized as are others in the interference of Christ; but indeed there is none whose manifestation is more marked or more wonderful. It was not merely that God entered into conflict with and overcame Satan. Angels knew, and men knew, that the power of God was immeasurably greater than the power of Satan; and that, therefore, if the two were antagonists, there could not be doubt on which side would be victory. But the amazing display of God's power is that of power over Himself. This had been exhibited from the first moment of our apostasy. When penalty had been incurred, and God forbore to strike, then was the grandest demonstration of Omnipotence. If I would figure to myself Almightyness, creation is as

nothing to me when compared with long-suffering. Worlds upon worlds, systems upon systems, a syllable peopling immensity, and causing the untravelled solitude to teem with life, all this conveys to me no such august idea of Omnipotence, as God's bearing with sinners, and not striking down the rebellious. We say again, that long-suffering is God's power over Himself: it is restraint on his own attributes,—and that matter is at his disposal, this is nothing; that spirit is at his disposal, this is nothing: but that He can be insulted, and not take vengeance; defied, and not crush; blasphemed, and not annihilate; this is the overcoming truth: this is the being Omnipotent enough to control Omnipotence; and myself, in my constant offences, a living thing and yet a sinful, myself am greater proof how mighty is the Lord, than the earth with all its wonders, and the firmament with all its hosts.

But this is not the only respect in which redemption displayed power. Redemption demanded the humiliation of God: and that God could humble Himself—it was the same kind of demonstration of Omnipotence, though we know not whether it be not yet more surprising, as that furnished by long-suffering. God could not make Himself: to be divine, He must necessarily be self-existent. And if He could not produce, neither could He destroy Himself; it being just as contrary to the divine nature, to suppose Him ceasing as beginning to be God. But that, without ceasing to be God, He

should be able to empty Himself, as in the strong language of Scripture, to circumscribe Himself within a human body, and to put off his glories by shrouding Himself in matter—we say of this, that it was apparently such an approach towards the suspension, or even the cessation, of Deity, it was drawing so close to the impossibility, that imagination can figure nothing that could more task Omnipotence—to cease to be God, this was the impossible: to remain God, and yet be found in the likeness of man, this was not the impossible, but, until done, was the inconceivable; oh, it was the stopping of the pulse, and yet keeping the life; the giving that to be born which never had beginning, to die which never can have end. If we may use such expression, there seemed to be in humility a natural unsuitableness to divinity: it becomes the created; but appears excluded, by his very nature, from the uncreated. And, therefore, that God should humble Himself, that He who was rich should for our sakes become poor, it is not merely, nor mainly, the condescension, or the loving-kindness, which is wonderful in this; it is the power—and that divinity and humanity should coalesce to make a Mediator, I more recognize Omnipotence in the effecting such combination, than in all those registers of might, whose letters are the mountains or whose syllables the stars.

And then, again, the power displayed throughout the application of redemption, displayed in the change of heart, in the renewal of nature, and finally in the

quickenings of the dust of saints; so that this corruptible puts on incorruption, this mortal immortality, where shall we find the parallel to this? And when you combine these several demonstrations of Almightyness, and suppose that angels read each in the incarnation, seeing that to them the incarnation revealed the whole of redemption, you must admit that the power as well as the wisdom of the Most High was so manifested by Christ's birth to heavenly beings, that "Gloria in excelsis" might be expected as their chorus. There had undoubtedly been thrown open to these lofty creatures the natural and spiritual creations, so that, free to expatiate over the work of God's hands, and to penetrate its wonders, they had gathered such ideas as are unattainable by ourselves of Him to whom they referred all the architecture and all the animation. But when Deity was before them, manifesting long-suffering, that power over Himself which had not been shown when their own compeers transgressed—for with the fall of angels came vengeance, and to be a rebel was to be crushed—and when divinity was exhibited in humility, such might having been applied to the mightiest as brought him down from his inaccessible splendours, and made Him of no reputation; and yet further, when they saw how corruption would be eradicated from the corruptible, and graves resign their vast population, and death be swallowed up in victory, and an innumerable company of the apostate become kings and priests unto the living

God, and new heavens and a new earth rise from the ruin and wreck of the old, and all through the energies of the one work of mediation; oh, we think it must have been as nothing to them, that they had traversed creation in its height and breadth and length, and found Omnipotence at every step; redemption was such a fresh and unrivalled display of Almightyness, that, as though now for the first time they had learned that nothing was too hard for the Lord, they would excite each the other with the inspiriting summons, "Glory, glory to God in the highest."

You are to add to all this, that, in God's purpose towards men, as laid open by the incarnation, angels must have found such proofs of divine goodness as they could not gather from any other exhibition. That their Creator was a being of amazing benevolence, full of love towards the obedient—of this it was impossible they could entertain doubt: their own existence, and their own enjoyments, attested a principle in Deity, leading Him to desire and design the universal happiness. But they had not beheld mercy rejoicing against judgment. Nothing had occurred, but quite the reverse, to inform them that the love of their Maker could be proof against baseness, against ingratitude, against rebellion. In the only instance, so far as we know, besides our own, in which creatures had thrown off allegiance, love had seemed extinguished by apostasy, and made no attempt to mitigate the severities of justice.

Angels might therefore have supposed, judging from what had happened in their own rank of being, that to displease God was to lose, at once and for ever, all share in his mercies. They could have had no idea, until informed of God's dealings with men, that divine love was of a nature, and a strength, to triumph over unworthiness, and preserve its attachments in spite of the enmity of its objects. It was not possible that such idea could be gathered from any of the ordinary demonstrations of benevolence, from those exuberant and tender compassions which encircled, as they knew, and attended the countless tribes that had done nothing to alienate divine favour. Until there had been disobedience, they could not determine whether love could bear with ingratitude; and when the disobedience came, and evil first entered the universe, the decision must have been, that ingratitude turned love into hatred. And, therefore, when they found the divine compassions encompassing man in the midst of his rebellion, and saw that love could subsist unimpaired when every thing had been done to alienate and quench it; will you not allow that the goodness of the Almighty was displayed to them under an aspect heretofore unimagined, and perhaps even thought impossible; an aspect which it did not wear when busied with ministering to the wants of all ranks in creation, and wondrously providing that there should be happiness, wheresoever there was innocence, throughout the universe? and shall we then marvel

that, as though then for the first time known to be infinitely benevolent, because then for the first time commending his love by fixing it on an enemy, our Maker should have seemed to angels to demand a new anthem of enraptured adoration, so that all the company of heaven, learning from the incarnation what divine mercy was, uttered and answered to the summons, "Glory, glory to God in the highest?"

We will, however, turn to the considering the description which angels give of the work of redemption; and which, if we rightly interpret the doxology, contains much of their reason for praising the Lord. Let glory—this seems the import of the passage—be ascribed to God by the highest ranks in creation: for there is now peace on earth, that is, good-will towards men. Considering redemption as already completed,—for the incarnation, though only the commencement, gave certain pledge of the consummation,—angels allege as its consequence, that peace, long banished from the earth, is restored, for that God can now again entertain "good-will towards men." Hence they identify, or represent as the same thing, good-will being felt to mankind, and peace being re-established upon earth. And it is this identity on which we now have to speak. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." The Mediator, by obeying and dying in our stead, removed those separating causes which kept us far off from our Maker: He did not, indeed, render us the objects of good-will,—that we were

already, otherwise there would have been no interference on our behalf,—but He made it honourable on the part of God to show us good-will, consistent with his attributes to deal with us as no longer enemies. Hence it might accurately be said, that, when Christ was born, there was “good-will towards men:” the birth was the earnest of the world’s redemption; and redemption, though it produced not the good-will, made a clear space for its exercise. And that God could now display good-will towards men, inasmuch as He had reconciled them to Himself, was virtually the same thing as that there was now “peace upon earth.” There was peace upon earth in the noblest and most important of all senses: God and man were at peace; those who sometimes were far off being made nigh by Christ’s blood.

But, indeed, if God’s good-will towards men were to produce its legitimate effects, there would be peace upon earth in a larger and more literal signification. It is possible that angels, when exulting that a surety had been found for humankind, contemplated results which ought indeed to have followed, but which our corruption has arrested. There would verily be peace upon earth, and that too because there is good-will towards men, if the tendencies of Christianity were not counteracted by the passions of those whom it addresses. We know not whether, engrossed with magnificent consequences which have the future for their scene, we are not

apt to overlook the present benefits which Christianity is adapted to confer. We are not to judge these benefits by what we see produced, but by what would be produced, if acknowledged tendencies were allowed their full scope. The tendencies of the Gospel—and these, it may be, excited the gladness of angels,—are manifestly to the banishing discord in its every shape, to the repressing envy, and malice, and ill-will, and to the linking in the closest brotherhood all the families of our race. And it may, indeed, be of yet distant days that prophecy speaks, when declaring that men “shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” But, nevertheless, those days would be both the past and the present, if the Gospel had acquired universal dominion. The Millennium, with all that beauty and brilliancy which Scriptural images throw round this season of blessedness, is nothing but Christianity pervading all the homes, and grained into all the hearts, of the children of men. If, wheresoever nominally received, Christianity had been received into the hearts of a people, there would have been comparatively banished from the circles of that community, all that ministers to public inquietude or private unhappiness. Fill a country with true Christians, and you necessarily fill it with those who wish each other’s good, and bear each other’s burdens. You exile from that country the

wrongs and jealousies and divisions which keep society ever agitated; and introduce that deep and permanent tranquillity, which can only subsist where the fear of God has stilled those countless under-currents which, if you could dive, you would now find beneath the smoothest surface.

So that angels did but proclaim what Christianity was designed and fitted to produce, when, on the birth-night of Him who came to restore us to the enjoyment of the good-will of God, they made the firmament ring with the announcement, that now there was peace upon earth. Peace has not, indeed, followed; and angels, as they behold how discord and trouble overspread the redeemed earth, may marvel that the prophecy, if such it may be called, which they uttered to the shepherds at Bethlehem, should have been only so partially fulfilled. But this has resulted from nothing but the antipathy and resistance of our nature to a religion which demands self-denial and holiness. Angels, it may be, did not reckon on such antipathy and resistance. They may have thought,—and on this persuasion they may have woven their chorus,—that all enmity would give way before so touching a demonstration of divine love, as that of God's sending his own Son to die for man's sins. They sang of peace upon earth: for as salvation itself had not come within their discovery, neither had its possible rejection by the great mass of its objects. Oh! it may not have seemed more insupposable to angels, that men could be redeemed,

than that, if redeemed, they could throw back with scorn the mercy God proffered. And, therefore, there is to us something wonderfully affecting in the circumstance, that angels sang of that as immediate, which, alas! even yet we cannot point to as produced. It is as though angels had thought man less obdurate, less wedded to iniquity, less in love with ruin, than experience has proved him. Angels could not think, that, with here and there a few exceptions, those for whom Christ died would despise and reject Him; and therefore did they sing of instant peace, never calculating, that, through human indifference and infidelity, centuries of conflict and misery would yet roll heavily over men. They supposed that the wretched would be willing to be made happy, and the sinking to be rescued, and the lost to be saved: and hence their chorus of "peace on earth, good-will towards men." Oh! they had not been able to discover that Jesus would die: could they, then, discover the alone greater marvel, that He would be crucified afresh, and put to open shame, by thousands upon thousands in every generation?

Such, then, is that Gospel, thus honourable to God and beneficial to man, which is henceforward to be stately preached within these walls. This building has been reared and consecrated on purpose for the solemn gatherings of the people, when they shall assemble to worship God in the manner which this Gospel prescribes, to be instructed in the truths which it unfolds, and to partake of the sacraments which it

instituted. And though I am but a stranger amongst you, I do heartily rejoice that another sanctuary has now been provided, in which the inhabitants—especially the poorer—of this important and ever-growing town may enjoy the ministrations of Christianity. It is a noble and refreshing spectacle which this town presents: nowhere has there been a finer effort at church extension; but if the actually poor population be little short of twenty thousand, and if the free-sittings provided by the Establishment be much short of six, it is but too evident how greatly this additional church was needed, and how great a deficiency even this will still leave. You are thus applying the only true remedy to those growing disorders which excite the alarm of every lover of God and of man. We may confidently assert, basing our statement on what may be called the ecclesiastical statistics of England and Scotland, that, in exact proportion that the parochial economy has been adequate to the wants of a district, has that district been the seat of virtue, loyalty, and happiness; and that, wherever a church has been planted in the midst of a neglected and dissolute neighbourhood, and furnished with an active, self-denying minister, there has been rapidly effected a great change for the better; as though all that is needed to the reclaiming the moral waste produced by the neglect of past years, were the breaking our parishes into manageable portions, and giving to each its sanctuary and its pastor. Neither is there any

reason why we should feel surprised at such result. The Christian religion, working through the ordinances of the Christian Church, is the appointed instrument for converting the wilderness into the garden, and preserving the verdure once produced. What marvel, then, if a dearth of these ordinances have been followed by luxuriant growth in crime, and their comparative abundance by the cheering exhibition of virtuous, well-conditioned families?

We do, therefore, heartily rejoice in every addition to the sanctuaries of the Established Church; more particularly when, as in the present instance, a large share of the increased accommodation is given up to the poor. I know not what may be the precise condition of the poor in this town; but I know what it is in many other places. I know that we are reaping the bitter fruits of long and criminal neglect, in the growth of infidelity amongst the lower orders,—infidelity under a new name, but with even more than its old hatefulness and destructiveness; so that if we do not set ourselves vigorously to work, diffusing with all carefulness and industry the pure Gospel of Christ, we are menaced with the being surrounded by a godless population, which shall cast its derision on all that is sacred in faith, and a blight on all that is lovely in our homes. And it is the business of the Established Church to meet this emergence: it is her office; and she must not delegate it to other hands, even if other hands were ready to undertake it. For our own part, we do not

see that an Establishment fulfils its high calling, until it offers the means of religious instruction to all in the land. And we have a thorough persuasion that, if its offers were thus equal to the demand, there would not be found many who would seek elsewhere for the public means of grace. The want of church-room has made its thousands of dissenters, where objection to the Church services has made one. We say this with as much of sorrow as of confidence. For it is cause of pungent regret, that our Establishment has been so deficient in a power of expansion, that not only have thousands been left in utter ignorance, but thousands more have been driven to the conventicle, who would never have been guilty of schism, had the Church extended to them the benefits of her ministry.

And it may, or it may not, accord with the spirit of the age, to speak of schism as a sin: but God forbid that the Church should shrink from asserting her authority—an authority derived, not from the being established, but from the being apostolical—and which makes it no light, no indifferent thing, to separate from her communion, and to set up teachers who, however distinguished by personal piety, and however eminent in scriptural knowledge, want what we must hold to be indispensable to the office they assume, the appointment of God conveyed through the primitive and unadulterated channels. Assailed as an establishment, these are days in which our Church must boldly declare

herself apostolical. You may strip her of her temporalities, you may deprive her of the support of the state—but she denies that you can take from her what makes her the Church. The state might establish any sect it pleased, or it might brand itself with an infidel brand by refusing to have any thing to do with the support of Christianity; but the established sect would be as far off as ever from being an apostolical Church, whilst the discarded Church would be as far off as ever from surrendering its apostolical character. Therefore, let it never be thought, when the Church vehemently resists the dissolution of the connexion between herself and the state, that the resistance proceeds from a feeling, that in ceasing to be established we should cease to be the Church. We feel indeed that it would be a suicidal act on the part of the state, to sever itself from the Church, and thus abjure all care of Christianity. We can never believe that God hath anointed princes, and given the sceptre to potentates, on purpose merely that they may maintain public order, foster commerce, and defend the rights of property. This is a part, but only a small part, of their office—a king is the vicegerent of Deity, and Deity, from his very nature, must legislate for eternity. We reckon, therefore, the religious instruction of the people as the most sacred of the duties which devolve upon legislators; and we protest against a government's throwing off the most solemn of its obligations, and

thus bringing on a land the withering frown of the Almighty's displeasure. But, nevertheless, the Church has in her the elements of strength, and would live by herself; whilst the state, by dissociating itself from religion, would have written apostate on its forehead; and, in ridding itself of what some dare to call an incubus, would have thrown overboard the ballast, which, inasmuch as it is a national recognition of subjection to Christ, has steadied the kingdom in many fierce hurricanes of political convulsion.

We cannot, however, enlarge further on these and similar topics, which are naturally suggested by the occasion of our assembling. We have only again to express the delight which we feel that a church has now been opened for numbers who could otherwise have had no access to the authorized ministrations of the Christian religion. We rejoice in the expectation that within these walls will many assemble to confess sin, to cry for mercy, and to chaunt the praises of their Creator and Redeemer. Here will they "receive with meekness the ingrafted word which is able to save their souls." Here will they kneel in deep humility, and partake by faith of the body and blood of the Lord. Hither—of course we speak only of the uses of the structure, without reference to what may be, in the present instance, the parochial arrangements—hither will come those who desire to be joined in the union which typifies that between Christ and his Church—the legislature

may permit a Christian population to make marriage a civil contract; but a Christian population will spurn the permission, and form no where but in God's house that sacred alliance, so mysteriously significative. Hither will infants be brought, that they may be regenerated in the waters of baptism: Christian parents know that the law of the land may be satisfied if they insert in an office-book the birth-day and name of a child, but that the law of Christ is fatally set at nought, unless the priest baptize that child "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And to the gates of this building may wind the sorrowing train that accompanies a brother, or a sister, to the long home appointed for our race. Within these walls, and over the cold relics of the dead, may be heard the sublime challenge, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" and mourners shall dry their tears, and commit a beloved one to the dust, in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. Thus may this building become associated with the joys and sorrows of the surrounding population, with the marriages, and the births, and the funerals; haunted by rich memories as well as splendid hopes—the place which is most peopled to recollection with what has been interesting in life, and to expectation with what is brilliant in eternity. O, the parish church, and the parish minister—the one is the structure which most awakens emotions in a wan-

derer's breast, after long years of absence, as though it were the gathering-place for all the charities of the heart; and the other so winds himself, by his office, into the histories of those amongst whom he ministers, that he becomes, unconsciously, a memento of the past, and may use the influence which this gives in leading onwards to the future.

That the Almighty God may fill this Church with his presence, and cause his blessing to rest abundantly on him who is to minister therein, is and will be my earnest petition. I must always feel as though associated by no common ties with a church, in which mine was the first voice to take up, however feebly, the angelic proclamation, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

And to whom out of the honoured list of apostles and saints do ye dedicate this structure? To St. John the Evangelist. Then let the evangelist preach to you ere ye depart. "Whosoever hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" The poor are appealing to you: there is yet a considerable sum required, ere this church can permanently secure to the poor the blessings of a stated ministry; and will you be slack in preventing such anomaly as that, on the day of the opening of the church of St. John the Evangelist, there should be

no display of the love which was this evangelist's special characteristic?

We appeal to the inhabitants of the town: they are urged by every possible motive: this church is erected for their fellow-parishioners, whose condition they cannot improve without improving their own, whom they cannot neglect without bringing themselves in a measure under the anathema of St. Paul, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." We appeal to the visitors, if such there be present, those who are sojourning here for health or recreation. I always feel as if we owed a large debt to the destitute of places to which we resort, when worn with sickness, or wearied with toil. We ought not to be gladdened by their landscapes, without striving in return to scatter the precious seed of God's Word. I feel as if the dwellers in the Alps and Pyrenees had a claim upon me for the glorious lessons in the magnificence of the Creator which have been given me in their fastnesses. I feel as if the Norwegian might call upon me to pay thankfully for the notices of divinity which have been thrown to me from his mighty pinnacles, his vast forests, his everlasting snows, his rushing cataracts. And I cannot tread the romantic parts of our own fair land, and not feel that its wild and beautiful scenes, its tangled glens, its sunny hills, its sparkling

waters, summon us not to show ourselves ungrateful for the having gazed on its pictures, but to strive, in return, that the inhabitants may be all led to the river of life, to the garden of the Lord. And ye come hither to draw health from the waters of the great deep, to awe and enchant yourselves with gazing on that sublime image of the Eternal One, glorious and wonderful, whether the skies glass their azure in its unruffled mirror, or the tempest have lashed it into madness. Will you enjoy the sea, and care nothing whether those who inhabit its shores know, or know not, of the "anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, which entereth into that within the veil?" Again, we bring against you the evangelist to whom you have dedicated this church. We are told by St. John, that in the new heavens, and the new earth, there shall be "no more sea." The sea remains till the general judgment, gives up its dead, and then disappears from the renovated system. Yet ere it departs, it may combine with the rest of creation in witnessing against us. The sun shall witness, if we have abused the brilliant daylight to works of iniquity. The darkness shall witness, if we have employed its mantle to shroud wickedness. The corn and the wine shall witness, if we have indulged inordinately our appetites. The gold shall witness, if hoarded avariciously, or squandered profligately. And the sea shall witness, witness with its roaring thunders, and its crested billows, if we have enjoyed its beauty

and its blessing, and done nothing to gird its shores with the rock of ages, to plant the cliffs against which it breaks with those spires which often serve as landmarks to the mariner on its surface, whilst they point him moreover to a haven of everlasting rest.

SERMON VII.¹

THE WORD IN SEASON.

ISAIAH I. 4.

“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary : he wakeneth morning by morning ; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.”

It is generally admitted, that the speaker of these words is the Messiah, the second person of the ever-blessed Trinity, who anticipated, as it were, his assuming our nature, and spake as though He had already appeared in the flesh. The chapter commences with an address from Jehovah Himself : “Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away ? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you ?” The address, you observe, is in the first person—Jehovah Himself speaks, not the prophet in his name. And since this form of address is

¹ Preached at the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy, St. Paul’s Cathedral, 1844.

continued throughout the chapter, there being no discoverable change in the party who speaks, we must conclude that it is Jehovah who gives utterance to our text, however inappropriate, at first, the words may seem to a person of the Godhead.

But if the speaker be Jehovah, He must evidently be Jehovah in some very peculiar position and character; for not only does He represent Himself in our text as a scholar—and even this appears incongruous with Deity—but He goes on to represent Himself as a sufferer, a sufferer in no ordinary measure. “The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” If you took away all knowledge of the scheme of our redemption, it would be utterly inexplicable how, in a chapter where there is no change of person, it should be said in one part, “I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering;” and in another, “I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” But all difficulty vanishes, when we have in our hands the history of a being who is described as “over all, God blessed for ever¹,” as “the Word” that “was in the beginning with God²,” and that “was God,” and of whom nevertheless we find it recorded, “Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the

¹ Rom. ix. 5.

² St. John i. 2.

palms of their hands³." There is no such book of contradictions as the Bible, if there be no person who is both human and divine. Nothing but such a combination will make sense of the Bible, or rescue it from containing a vast mass of inconsistencies. Some may think that it would simplify the Christian theology, to remove from it the mystery that two natures coalesced in the one person of Christ. But as the divinity of our Lord is the foundation of our hope, so is it the key to the Bible: we acknowledge reverently a great mystery, but not the thousandth part as great as the whole Bible becomes on the supposition that Christ was only man.

We shall assume, therefore, throughout our discourse, that the being who speaks in our text is the second person of the ever-blessed Trinity; and that He speaks in that character of a mediator which He had covenanted from all eternity to bear, and which required that, in "the fulness of time," He should be made flesh, and dwell amongst men. It may indeed seem strange that a person of the Godhead should speak of Himself in the terms here employed, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned: he wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." These expressions appear to belong to a being who is purely a recipient,

³ Matt. xxvi. 67.

who depends on some higher being for power and instruction: can they then be appropriate to one in whom dwelleth all fulness, who, in place of requiring to have knowledge communicated, is Himself none other than the Omniscient? Certainly not, if there be no capacity in which we may regard Christ but that of a person of the Godhead. Survey Him however in his capacity of Mediator—a capacity in which, as man, He was progressive in wisdom, and in which He had to seek and obtain supplies of strength from above—and such expressions are every way applicable: undoubtedly they set Him before us as “inferior to the Father;” but we are as ready to confess Him “inferior to the Father as touching his manhood,” as we are earnest to maintain Him “equal to the Father as touching his Godhead.”

But when it has been affirmed that the expression in our text, though denoting inferiority in office, is not necessarily at variance with the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, we may acknowledge that the language here employed of Himself by the Redeemer, is such as perhaps we could hardly have expected. We refer now to that process of instruction which is so emphatically described, the Son being represented as the pupil or scholar of the Father, and the teaching being spoken of as unwearied and continual. “He wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” There is here portrayed a course of

education: the Lord God resumes every day the lessons which were to qualify the Son for his office: in so brief a description, you could not have the figures more strikingly displayed of a teacher most earnest in giving, and of a scholar as earnest in receiving instruction. But the assertion of St. Luke is evidence enough that a delineation such as this is not inappropriate to the Lord our Redeemer. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man⁴." This assertion is remarkable. It not only puts Christ, in certain great respects, on a par with ourselves—for by speaking of growth both in wisdom and stature, the Evangelist represents the soul, like the body, as in advancement or progress—but by stating that He grew "in favour with God and man," it would seem to indicate that there was an ever-increasing conformity on the part of the Mediator to the will of the Father. Not, of course, that at any time could Christ have been reluctant to do God's will. But this will may have been only gradually disclosed, and, as fast as disclosed, consented to by Christ. Who can tell us how the man Christ Jesus became informed, as He grew up, of the nature of the mediatorial office? how, as He advanced from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to manhood, He acquired greater knowledge as to the business of his mission, and deepened in

⁴ Luke ii. 52.

resolution to do the will of his Father? But, in the very expressive language of the text, God may have “wakened him morning by morning.” Day by day, so soon as there was intelligence enough in the child to receive such stupendous communications, did the Lord God, we may believe, impart information as to the purposes for which He had been born; so that the child “grew in wisdom,” not only because, like other children, He grew in acquaintance with ordinary things, but especially because He acquired understanding of that vast scheme of deliverance which the wisdom of God had from all eternity devised. It were presumption, or worse, to enquire in what degrees, or by what successive steps, the instruction was given; or at what time in his life the man Christ Jesus became aware of all the endurances that would be required of Him in the mediatorial work. But our text seems to forbid doubt that the communications were gradual, so that, morning by morning, was something new told, till at last the whole task of labour, ignominy, and death, lay spread before the view of the Surety of our race. What lessons were these which, day by day, the Saviour wakened to receive! lessons as to the lost condition of man, the dreadfulness of Divine wrath, the fearful immenseness of the undertaking proposed to Him as a substitute for sinners. And He shrunk not as these lessons were given—“The Lord God hath opened mine ear;

and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back ⁵.”

But over and above the instruction of Christ in the nature of the mediatorial work, we may believe that God wakened Him morning by morning, in order that He might have those “treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” which were to fit Him for the great office of teacher of the nations. The Spirit was given to Him without measure; and none can doubt that, during the many years which our Lord passed in retirement, this Divine agent was gradually preparing Him to speak as never man spake, to deliver utterances which should scatter the darkness of ages, and pour a flood of light over the duties and destinies of our race. You have this, in fact, asserted in the text; for not only is a process of instruction there attributed to God, but the result of that process is unequivocally alleged, in that God is said to have given unto Christ “the tongue of the learned.” “The tongue of the learned!”—I imagine myself placed in the world at the time when the Christ was expected, commissioned to announce to it that God was about to send his own Son, having endowed Him with “the tongue of the learned.” What excitement in all the schools of philosophy! what gatherings of the sages of the earth! what expectations of the discoveries with which science

⁵ Isaiah l. 5.

was about to be enriched! Now, say they, shall long-hidden secrets be revealed: now shall we understand the motions of stars: now shall we penetrate the laboratories of nature, and observe all those processes of which, at present, we see only the results. For what purpose can “the tongue of the learned” have been given to a Divine person, if not that He may expound mysteries to the world, that He may tell us what the wise have been unable to detect, and the studious laboured in vain to unfold?

But this Divine person shall speak for Himself to the assembled throng of philosophers and sages. Yes, “the Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned;” and I have descended that I might speak with that tongue to every nation of the earth. But He hath not given me the tongue, that I might tell how stars and planets roll. He hath not given it me, that I might settle the disputes of the wise, that I might solve the curious questions propounded in your academies, and clear the paradoxes in which you are entangled. He hath given me the tongue, not that I should know how to speak a word to you, ye “disputers of this world;” nor to you, ye diligent students of the wonders of the universe, whose marchings are on the firmament, and whose searchings into the depths; but simply “that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.” Oh, how fallen are the expectant countenances of philosophers

and sages! Is this all? they exclaim. Was it only for this that "the tongue of the learned" was bestowed? Does this require, or can this employ, "the tongue of the learned?"

Nay, men of science, turn not angrily away. With all your wisdom you have never been able to do this. The weary have sought to you in vain. They have found no "word in season," no word of comfort and sustainment; and why then should you be indignant at the province here assigned to "the tongue of the learned?" There is no better description to be given of the world, under a moral point of view, at the time when the Redeemer appeared, than is contained in the one emphatic word "weary." The Gentiles were "weary" with fruitless searchings after truth; the Jews were "weary" with long expectings of the Christ. In vain had reason striven to form some definite conception of man's position with reference to God, of his future condition, of his possibilities of acceptance and happiness. Truth had evaded inquiry; and the "weary," unable to abstain altogether from the search, grew fainter and fainter, disgusted with a philosophy which did but perplex, and darkened by speculations which ended in conjecture when certainty was sought. And even where there was the knowledge of a promised deliverer, it might be said, in the wise man's words, that "hope deferred had made the heart sick⁶:" so long had the

⁶ Prov. xiii. 12.

Redeemer been looked for by the faithful, that they were almost tempted to ask whether God had not indeed "forgotten to be gracious⁷?"

And what tongue but "the tongue of the learned" could speak "a word in season," to a world oppressed with this universal weariness? The tongue must be one which could disclose the mysteries of Godhead, mysteries immeasurably transcending those of stars in their courses. It must be one which could prove the immortality of the soul, a truth debated by the most skilful philosophers, and left undetermined. It must be charged with intelligence as to the pardon of sin, as to a mode of reconciliation between man and his Maker, things into which even angels had in vain striven to look—no marvel then if the best of human reasoners had reached no conclusion, unless one which consigned to despair. And this tongue moreover must be able to expound ancient Scriptures, to illustrate the writings of Moses and the Prophets, which Scribes and Pharisees, the sages of the land, had not so much rendered plain, as shown to be difficult. Did not then "the weary" require "the tongue of the learned;" could any tongue but "the tongue of the learned" have addressed them with seasonable words? Indeed it was not human learning which could have clothed the tongue with appropriate speech. But this only

⁷ Ps. lxxvii. 9.

magnifies the learning, showing that it must be derived from a higher than any earthly school, even from a heavenly instructor.

And yet there is no reason why the throng of sages and philosophers should go away disappointed at finding for what purpose "the tongue of the learned" would be used. They too were "weary," not less weary with searching after truth in other departments, than with inquiring after it in regard to religion. And if the Mediator did not come purposely to relieve this weariness, it has happened that his "word in season" to man, as an immortal, accountable being, has been a "word in season" to him as a rational and thinking—every science having seemed to flourish through contact with Christianity, and reason having been strengthened by revelation, whether received or rejected. So that, whilst we do not say that in claiming for Himself "the tongue of the learned," Christ designed to use the word "learned" in its ordinary acceptance, we may safely affirm that his tongue has been practically that which has shed abroad knowledge. He spake not with the tongue of the philosopher; but, as though all philosophy were embodied in Christianity, He could not speak of the kingdom of heaven as opened, without opening to the gaze of science the mighty fields of space: He could not speak of death as abolished, without abolishing the delusions which had imposed themselves upon reason for truths: He could not speak of man as freed from the curse, without freeing

his mind from shackles, and giving it to range through earth, sea, air. Then there was no need that any class should depart disappointed, when the Redeemer announced the office, in order to fit Him for which the Lord God had wakened Him "morning by morning." The "weary," to whom He specially came, were indeed those on whom was pressing heavily the felt burden of sin. But the whole creation was groaning and travailing in pain. Every where there was mistake, or deceit, or fruitless inquiry, or disappointed hope. Weariness was on all hands, on all pursuits—the man of science, whom truth seemed perpetually to elude; the man of pleasure, who found nothing that could satisfy; the man of ambition, who chased shadows for substances—weariness was upon them all. And the "word in season" was unto them all—a word which, like that originally uttered by God, seemed to make all things new, for it laid open the universe, if it did not create; a word which gave to human desire things even richer than it could compass; a word which crowded eternity with palaces and thrones; not phantoms, but realities. Oh, why might not every tribe and every individual upon the earth, have joined in one thankful confession, that unto Christ had been given "the tongue of the learned," and that too for the express purpose in each separate case, that He might "know how to speak a word in season to him that was weary?"

But let us confine ourselves especially to those

cases of weariness which must have been primarily referred to by Christ, cases to which, when He came to the accomplishment of his office, He addressed the beautiful words, "Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest⁸." Is there any suitableness to these cases in "the tongue of the learned?" was there room for the exercise of such a tongue, or was such a tongue needed, when there was nothing to be done but the speaking "a word in season" to parties thus burdened? This is a point well deserving attention. The "tongue of the learned" might seem to be called for, if there were knotty questions to settle, or thorny controversies to reconcile; but what will it find to do where conscience is ill at ease, or the heart wrung with sorrow? Indeed, if you take learning in its ordinary sense, if you were to send what is commonly called a learned man, and in his capacity of a learned man, to the terrified sinner, or the weeping mourner, it is likely that he would be quite out of place, that all his science would fail to supply the "word in season." And, nevertheless, there is a learning which is needed, a deep acquaintance with the heart and its workings, a thorough knowledge of the springs and sources of moral disquietude, and as thorough a knowledge of the remedies provided by God. They are vastly mistaken who think, that then only is a man showing himself "learned,"

⁸ Matt. xi. 28.

when he is bringing forth the stores of a ponderous erudition, quoting classical authors, adducing historical facts, or explaining natural phenomena. In the cottages of the poor, where there are consciences to be probed, and cares to be soothed, he may be as much applying the results of long study, and using riches accumulated in memory, as when he carries on a controversy, employing the weapons, and displaying the resources, of a most accomplished scholarship. There is no volume so obscure, none so full of deep and dark things, as the human heart; and he must be well read in this volume, who would "speak a word in season." It is easy enough to speak a word out of season, to cry "Peace, peace, when there is no peace⁹," to apply Scriptural promises before the conscience is sufficiently probed, and even to withhold them when the time for healing has come—but "the word in season," the suitable truth at the suitable time, the message which shall exactly meet the case, and vary with its every variation, "the tongue of the learned" can alone deliver this, and the Lord God alone can bestow that tongue.

But how precisely did Christ fulfil the prophetic description; how truly was his tongue the "tongue of the learned," in that it spake the "word in season" to the weary. "He knew what was in man¹:" He needed not that any should teach

⁹ Jer. vi. 14.

¹ John ii. 25.

Him : his acquaintance with all the windings and depths of the heart was such as could not have been obtained by any finite understanding. And He so adapted his discourse to these windings and depths, that He left no case unprovided for, but with a wonderful skill delivered a seasonable word for every instance of weariness. He was "learned," in that his comprehensive knowledge took in all the possible varieties of human want; he was "learned," in that this knowledge embraced also the appropriate supply for each of these varieties. And "the tongue of the learned" was employed when, whether by his own mouth, or by that of those whom He commissioned to teach, utterances were delivered which have served, and will serve to the very end of time, to furnish to all cases of weariness a precise "word in season." It is one of the standing witnesses to the Divine origin of Scripture, or, which is nearly the same, to the Divine mission of Christ, that the Bible, though not a large book, contains something adapted to every possible case; so that no one can go in faith and humility to that volume, and not find it like an oracle whence come the responses of God; or like the high priest, in the glorious days of Jerusalem, on whose breastplate the Urim and the Thummim gave revelation of the mind of Jehovah. We cite "the weary and heavy laden" as witnesses to this. Is there the grief, is there the care, for the one of which there is nothing alleviating in Scripture, or for the other nothing soothing? What tear is there

which might not be dried, what sigh which might not be hushed, if, in place of having recourse to the enchantments of the world, men would betake themselves to the Bible, and seek there for consolation in the midst of their troubles? Is the weariness that of one who sits down oppressed with multiplied anxieties? how seasonable is the word, "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you²," or this that was spoken personally by Him who had "the tongue of the learned," "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith³." Is the weariness that resulting from disappointed expectations? what "a word in season" is there here! "God hath begotten you again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away⁴." Is the man "weary" with the loss of friend after friend, "weary" in that the grave seems insatiable, and continually demands fresh victims from amongst those whom he loves? There are many "words in season" for such an one as this: "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother⁵," might have seemed spoken on purpose for him; and had he been personally, he could not have been more appropriately addressed than in the admonition of the Apostle, "I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are

² 1 Pet. v. 7.

³ Matt. vi. 30.

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 4.

⁵ Prov. xviii. 24.

asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him ⁶." Or is the weariness not so much that of one oppressed with losses, as of one distressed with apprehensions, before whom the future seems dark, and round whom dangers are gathering? O what "words in season" are there here—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee ⁷:" "This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death ⁸." And let a man feel "weary" as a sinner, "weary" under the load of guilt, original and actual, "weary" with devising methods of his own for turning away the wrath which transgression must provoke; and then will "the tongue of the learned" address him in language which shall accomplish the saying, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country ⁹." It were vain to send him to Natural Theology, which cannot tell him of a propitiation for sin. It were vain to refer him to those who are counted "the learned" of the earth; for "the disputers of this world" have left unsolved, and almost unattempted, the question, "How should man be just with God ¹?" But refer him, in this his weariness, to Jesus, the "one Mediator between God and

⁶ 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.

⁷ Isaiah xliii. 2.

⁸ Psalm xlviii. 14.

⁹ Prov. xxv. 25.

¹ Job ix. 2.

men²," who "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself³," and presently he will exclaim with Solomon, "A word spoken in due season, how good is it⁴!" Knowing himself condemned, how seasonable will be the word, "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree⁵;" conscious of inability to work out a perfect righteousness of his own, how much in season must be the saying, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth⁶."

But in order that the "word in season" may be applied to the several cases, Christ has been pleased to appoint an order of men in his Church, whose special office it shall be to handle and enforce the blessed truths of his Gospel. The business of the clergyman is that of speaking a "word in season" to the weary, and verily he needs the "tongue of the learned," that he may perform so varied and intricate a duty. Rightly to "divide the word of truth," to avoid, as we before said, the speaking "peace where there is no peace," and to speak it at the right moment; to wield the threatenings and apply the promises of Scripture,—“Who is sufficient for these things?” indeed there is required “the tongue of the learned;” and though human education will do much, so much that what is commonly called “learning,” is not only advantageous, but indispensable, to the priesthood in their dealings with

² 1 Tim. ii. 5.

³ Heb. ix. 26.

⁴ Prov. xv. 23.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

⁶ Rom. x. 4.

the sinful and the sorrowing, God alone can make the clergyman duly skilful and faithful. It is no light thing to have in any measure the charge of the souls of our fellow-men; and often will the Christian minister almost sink beneath the burden, feeling that it would indeed be insupportable, were it not for such "a word in season" as this, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee ⁷."

Alas, that the burden should often be aggravated; that, harassed by spectacles of distress which have met him in his parochial rounds, saddened by the plaints of the widow, and by the sighs of the orphan, he should have to think how, but too possibly, he may leave his own wife to similar destitution, and bequeath the like poverty to his own children! Nay but, O thou who art faithfully doing "the work of an evangelist ⁸," there is "a word in season" for such forebodings as these—"Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me ⁹." Neither is the minister thrown altogether on his faith, when he would draw comfort from words such as these. He can see the promise fulfilled in the experience of the families of many of his brethren who have sunk into the grave after years of laborious usefulness. Kind friends have arisen to minister to the wants of the widow, and to provide for the orphan, stimulated

⁷ Ps. lv. 22.

⁸ 2 Tim. iv. 5.

⁹ Jer. xlix. 11.

by the feeling that a life of devotedness at the Christian altar entails a debt of gratitude on a Christian people. Not, however, that it can yet be said that this feeling has sufficiently shown itself in practical results. The life of devotedness indeed is signally and increasingly exhibited. They may talk of what is heroic and disinterested, and fetch their illustrations from the boastful annals of the brave and the bountiful—but the man of high intellectual endowment, of varied erudition, of powers which, employed on secular pursuits, could hardly have failed to command distinction and wealth—this man, consecrating himself to some obscure and poverty-stricken district, contented to wear away life in endeavours at carrying home the Gospel to the inmates of the courts and alleys of a degraded and dissolute neighbourhood, and that too on a pittance which barely suffices to keep off penury from his household whilst he lives, and fastens it on it inevitably when he dies; nay, we can thank God that the ranks of the Christian ministry are continually furnishing such spectacles as this: but we claim for them the giving dignity to our times: we declare of them that they leave hopelessly behind what philosophy ever taught, or chivalry achieved. The days of martyrs and confessors have not departed: amid the hovels of the starving, and at the bedsides of the dying, there is now the like devotedness to the cause of Christ crucified, ay, and as thorough, and as prodigal, an abandonment of self, and an em-

bracing of what the world counts affliction, as when, in times of fierce persecution, pure religion brought men to the scaffold and the axe. I dare not say that it is well, that in a country of unrivalled opulence, and in times when God hath given to that country magnificent empire, and mighty resources, there should be the multiplication of inconsiderable endowments, as though that were thought enough for the maintenance of a clergyman, which would barely suffice for that of an artizan. But it is well, it goes far towards redeeming the character of the age from the ignoble and the selfish, that numbers are ready, on endowments so scanty, to undertake the office of ministering to the poor.

This, however, only heightens the probability that many, now labouring in the ministry, will leave their widows and orphans in a condition of dependence, not to say destitution. And you are to endeavour to provide against this contingency. You are not only to extend to the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy such support as it has been accustomed to receive; you are entreated greatly to increase that support, to increase it not only by present contributions, but by liberal annual subscriptions. If small benefices are to be multiplied, the funds of this Corporation must be greatly increased, else will there be a spectacle in the land which cannot fail to draw upon it the indignation of the Lord; the spectacle of many families grappling with actual want, the families of men who laboured

“in season and out of season,” that they might win souls to Christ; who counted not their lives dear to them, if so be they might bless their country—oh, talk not of mere patriotism in comparison of this—bless their country by evangelizing their countrymen.

It is true that this Festival of the Sons of the Clergy is not celebrated, as have been those of preceding years. There is not the same departure from the ordinary service of the cathedral; for it has been wisely judged that the pomp of an orchestra is too dearly purchased by the suspension of daily prayer, and that the organ's solemn swell, as it alone accompanies the morning and evening chaunt, ought alone to aid you when, on occasions like the present, you meet to praise God, “not only with the lip,” but with the hearty consecration of your substance to his cause. Ay, ye have not been enticed hither to-day by instrumental melody; but ye have come at a better summons; ye have heard, in the hours of private meditation, the voices of those who live only that they may “speak a word in season to the weary;” ye have heard also their prayers, as, unable to provide for those dearest to them on earth, they have meekly committed them to the care of the Almighty. And ye have been moved to an earnest resolve that ye will “forsake not the Levite¹,” as long as ye live upon the earth; that ye will forsake him

¹ Deut. xii. 19.

not in the persons of the widow and the orphan. Ye have come hither to announce and act on this resolve—oh, better than to have come to listen to “the cornet and harp, and dulcimer and flute;” ye have come to provide, that from burdened hearts, and stricken spirits, there shall rise the notes of gratitude and praise—“the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy².”

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

² Job xxix. 13.

SERMON VIII.¹

CHURCH BUILDING.

HAGGAI i. 3, 4.

“ Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste ?”

VERY few words will be needed, to put you in possession of the force and bearing of this passage, as originally delivered. The Jews had but lately returned, in virtue of the decree of Cyrus in their favour, from their captivity of seventy years in Babylon, to which they had been sentenced for their own sins and those of their fathers. Very shortly after their return, they had commenced the rebuilding of the temple, applying themselves to it as the most important work, like men who were conscious that

¹ Preached at Camden Chapel, after reading the Queen's Letter of 1839, on behalf of the Society for Rebuilding and Repairing Churches.

Jerusalem could have no glory, until it again possessed the sanctuary of the Lord. But opposition soon arose: the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin sought to thwart the design, and applied to the court of Persia for authority to put a stop to the building. This was obtained; and we read in the Book of Ezra, "Then ceased the work of the house of God, which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia."

It was in this year, as we learn from the opening words of his prophecy, that Haggai was directed to address the message, of which our text is a part, to the Jews generally, but especially to Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, persons who, from station and influence, ought to have been earnest in endeavours to promote the rebuilding of the temple, though they would seem to have been chargeable with some measure of remissness. It may not have been altogether a matter of choice with the Jews, whether they should cease from the building, when the decree against them had been obtained by their enemies. It is possible, however, that they were too ready in yielding, having, perhaps, been secretly not displeased at an excuse for desisting from an expensive and laborious undertaking. We may gather this from observing the terms of the decree: for it was generally the building of the city, and not particularly that of the temple, which was prohibited by Artaxerxes. "Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that

this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me." But it does not appear that the Jews so complied with this decree, as to suspend the building of the city; though, as is expressly recorded, they left off working at the house of the Lord. We gather sufficiently from our text that they had persisted in building dwellings for themselves, though no progress had been made with the temple; and we can hardly therefore doubt that they had suffered themselves to be unnecessarily deterred from a work which they were bound to have prosecuted in preference to every other.

But however the case may have stood immediately on the issuing of the decree, it is certain that afterwards the Jews made frivolous excuses for not proceeding with the temple, and manifested a reluctance which was adapted to provoke the fierce anger of God. It was on this account that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were raised up: the chief object of their mission was to rouse the people to the long-neglected work, to reprove the indolent, and encourage the desponding. You learn from the verse preceding our text, that the common excuse was that the time had not arrived at which the building of the temple could be advantageously undertaken. "This people say, The time is not yet come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." No doubt the Jews argued, that, harassed as they were by enemies, straitened in resources, and still dwelling among ruins, they were in no

condition to rear a structure which should be worthy to succeed the temple of Solomon. They probably made the magnificence of the former sanctuary a reason for delaying the work, and plausibly stated, that until national affairs were a little more settled, it would not be possible for them to rebuild the temple with adequate splendour. But, all the while, they were not only building themselves houses, but sumptuous houses—as the expression “cieled houses,” which is used in our text, may be considered to denote. And this was enough to convict them of disinclination to the work of building the temple, and to show that their excuses, like those commonly of men who defer religious duties to more convenient seasons, were but marks of a secret resolve to escape, if possible, altogether from a labour which must interfere with more congenial pursuits.

Our text contains the abrupt and indignant expostulation with which the prophet was directed to meet the excuse as to the time not being come for building the Lord’s house. It gives force to the expostulation, and it is indeed almost required by its terms, that we should suppose the messenger of God planting himself in the midst of Jerusalem; houses, which were almost palaces, rising on the one side, whilst on the other were the foundations of the temple, just discernible amid the ruins which still proclaimed how fierce had been the vengeance which the Chaldeans were com-

missioned to execute. The prophet looks reproachfully on the rulers and people, as they hurry to and fro in their several pursuits, caring nothing, as it seemed, for the desolation of the sanctuary. They guess what is passing in his mind: they cannot fail to interpret his meaning, as he gazes on the fragments of the once glorious temple, and then turns towards them with an air expressive of mingled sorrow and anger. They approach him in the hope of softening his feelings; for they know his high commission, and would rather obtain his approval than endure his rebuke. They plead that the time is not come. Far be it from them to deny that the temple ought to be rebuilt: they not only confess it, but quite intend to undertake the work, when they shall be so circumstanced as to have a prospect of undertaking it with success. Wait a while, they seem to say to the prophet: you do us wrong in suspecting that it is through our indisposition or sloth, that no progress has been made with the house of the Lord: a fit season has not yet arrived; but when it comes, you shall find us all zeal and alacrity. I mark the prophet: the Spirit of the Lord is striving within him; and he seems to gather his strength for one indignant and overwhelming reply. He points with the one hand to structures, many of them completed, others in progress, but all betokening opulence; and with the other to heaps of ruins, which there had scarce been an effort to remove. The former are the residences of the men

who are pleading their inability to build the house of the Lord: the latter cover the ground on which a temple ought to have risen. Ah, there is scarcely need that he should speak; the contrast speaks for him: surely the people must have been stricken in conscience, and have shrunk away without waiting for the expression in language of what was so forcible in action. But whether they paused or not to hear the indignant expostulation, there was indeed enough to expose the utter hollowness of their specious excuse, and to prove them wilfully neglectful of the highest of duties, when the prophet, with one hand directed towards their lofty mansions, and with the other towards the dilapidated temple, brake into the upbraiding and energetic question, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?"

Now you are aware that it is our duty, on the present occasion, in obedience to the Queen's letter, which was read to you last Sunday, to endeavour to excite you to liberal contributions on behalf of the Incorporated Society for the building and enlarging of Churches throughout England and Wales. You will judge that we have selected our subject of discourse with reference to the occasion; that we design to draw something of a parallel between our own circumstances and conduct, and those of the Jews; to endeavour, that is, to derive from our "cieled houses" motives to increased diligence in building the house of the Lord. We shall therefore analyze

more minutely the expostulation of the text; for it will perhaps be found to assume or include truths which may be overlooked on a cursory inspection. No doubt there are points of view under which the text is more pertinent, if considered as addressed to the Jews, than when transferred to ourselves, who live beneath a different dispensation. With the Jews it might almost be said that the very existence of their religion depended on their restoring their temple: many of its most important rites and ceremonies could only be performed in the temple: so that, whilst they had no sacred structure, with its chambers and altars and mystic furniture, they were literally incapacitated for offering unto God such services as his law had prescribed. The case is not precisely the same with ourselves: Christianity is not a local religion, like Judaism; its ordinances are not, in the like sense or degree, limited to place; and though undoubtedly the want of a church would materially interfere with the performance of its rites, it would not so debilitate the worshipper as to leave him, like the Jew, unable to approach God in his own appointed way.

But it does not follow from this, that we are less criminal than the Jew, if, through our own indolence or negligence, the house of the Lord lie in any sense waste. It may be one of the gracious results of the change from Judaism to Christianity, from a contracted to a more ample dispensation, that, if we were unavoidably deprived of a church, we should

not, on that account, be unavoidably deprived of its ordinances. But this does not show us in the least more excusable, if we ourselves cause the want of a temple. We may be better able than the Jew to do without the temple, when the temple is destroyed, and yet be to the full as blameworthy as the Jew, if it be through our supineness that the temple is not rebuilt. The temple may not be indispensable to the Christian, as it was to the Jew—and this is for our advantage when there is no temple to which we can go up: but the temple may be valuable to the Christian as well as to the Jew; there may be privileges attached to it, which we have no right to expect elsewhere, so long as we have, or might have, its courts to which to resort—and this is for our condemnation, if we neglect to rear the house of the Lord.

We do not therefore confound our case with that of the Jews, though we are about to address to Christians the expostulation of the text, as if the change in dispensation had made no difference in its pertinence and force. These few remarks will suffice to show that we quite bear in mind the vast difference, so far as the ordinances of religion are concerned, between the Jews with the Temple of Jerusalem in ruins, and ourselves, for example, with all the churches in London burnt down. We undoubtedly might, in a great measure, keep our Sabbaths, offer our prayers, dispense the Sacraments, preach the word, notwithstanding the disastrous and

universal conflagration; though not so the Jews, who, in losing the temple, lost well-nigh the power of worshipping God. But the different degrees in which the two would be affected by the loss of the temple, are not to be confounded with different degrees in criminality, if the two be alike negligent in rebuilding the temple. There may be no difference in the latter, whilst there is the greatest in the former. And this having been settled, we may keep the Jews out of sight, and proceed, whenever Christians are to be upbraided for neglecting, or urged to the furthering, the great work of building churches for an augmented population, to ply them with the expostulation of our text, "Is it for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses. and this house lie waste?"

Now we have thankfully admitted that Christianity, unlike Judaism, is not tied to places; that its ordinances may be every where celebrated; so that the wanderers to a distant island may carry the system with them, and plant it as firmly in the new domain as ever Judaism was planted in Jerusalem, though it could not be moved thence to any other city. But now let us consider a little more in detail, what necessity there is, under this new and better covenant, for structures devoted to sacred uses, or what loss it is to us if "this house lie waste." It hath pleased the Almighty to reveal to our lost world a method of salvation; to send to us the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, which makes known

a way in which the guilty may be pardoned, and the alienated reconciled to Himself. In the first instance, this Gospel was published with supernatural evidences, through the ministrations of men who were enabled to prove, through the miracles which they worked, the Divine origin of the doctrines which they taught. And something of this kind might have continued. Supernatural evidences might have all along accompanied the march of Christianity, though, as every one must perceive, these evidences would have needed to be augmented and varied, forasmuch as the miraculous, if frequently repeated, will pass for the natural, and the deviation from a law, if it continually occur, will come to be regarded as itself the law. Or it is quite supposable, that, in place of a general and standing demonstration of the truth of Christianity, God might have appointed a succession of individual revelations; so that, whensoever it pleased Him to make Christ known to a person, there might have been vouchsafed to that person a distinct communication from Heaven, a communication which should have been explicit as to the mode of a sinner's acceptance, and which should have brought with it its evidence that it was verily the word of the Lord.

But it is altogether contrary to the established order of the Providence of God, that miracles should be employed where the result might be accomplished through ordinary means. And we might therefore justly have expected what we find to have been

appointed—namely, that the propagation of Divine truth, when once its origin had been sufficiently demonstrated, was left to no supernatural instrumentality; it was entrusted to the Church, furnished as that Church was with the written word, and encouraged to expect the continued aids of the Holy Ghost. This is now the appointed course of things—namely, that the Church, by diffusing the written word, and devoting an order of men to the preaching of the Gospel, is to labour at bringing men into acquaintance with Christ and his doctrine—not that either the written word, or the preacher, can of itself be effectual to produce conviction and renewal; but that the Spirit of God is pleased to employ this instrumentality, when He would bring men out of darkness into marvellous light.

And there is very little difficulty, when once it has been ascertained that such is the appointed mode for the propagation of truth, in seeing that the public ordinances of religion are indispensable to Christians, even as they were to the Jews. Let the churches of London, as we have already said, be all consumed in one vast conflagration, and you do not put our metropolis into precisely the same state as Jerusalem, with her one temple in ruins. We might meet in private houses; we might turn rooms into sanctuaries; and thus remedy in a measure the grievous disaster—whereas the Jews might not set up altars, except on one spot, nor celebrate the mysteries of their faith in any but the one hallowed

structure. Suppose however—for here lies the gist of the matter—that the solemn assembly ceased from amongst us; that there were no longer any gatherings, whether in dedicated or temporary buildings, for public worship, and the preaching of the Gospel; what would then be our religious condition? would it be better than that of the Jew, with no temple to frequent? We believe that the difference would be practically slight: we have the advantage over the Jew in that we can multiply our places for religious assembling, but not in that we may be deprived of all such places, and yet sustain no real injury. Even those of you who may be counted amongst the righteous, as having been brought to “repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,” would find the want of the public assembly—private reading of the word would never supply the place of its public preaching, nor secret meditation that of the Holy Communion; and that too, simply because having chosen and appointed a certain instrumentality, God will not suffer us to set it aside: He can send grace through any channel, but we have no right to look for it, neither is it ordinarily given, except through such channels as He has been pleased to ordain.

And if even the righteous would suffer through the want of the public assembly, what is to be said of the unrighteous, in whom there hath yet to be created the appetite for spiritual food, and who cannot therefore be expected to study the written

word in search of things by which they may be saved? It would be almost like putting a final arrest on the propagation of Divine truth, to close all our churches, and silence all our ministers. The printing-press might be increasingly active; it might multiply a hundredfold the copies of the Bible; and an industrious agency might insure their circulation, so that there should not be a family, and scarcely an individual, unfurnished with the Scriptures. But it is only saying that it pleaseth God "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," to say that all this diffusion of the written word would do little towards saving the country from utter ignorance and contempt of the Creator and Redeemer. It is the preaching of the word which ordinarily produces the reading. It is commonly in consequence of something which has been heard in the sanctuary, that a man is induced to betake himself to the study of the Bible; a text has been driven home to his conscience, as uttered by the minister of Christ, and then he has opened and examined the book, a line of which could penetrate with so mysterious a force. But Bibles without preachers would, for the most part, be Bibles without readers; and even where readers were found, we have little warrant for thinking that much conversion would ensue: we still fall back on the known ordinance of God, who has made the pulpit, not the press, the great engine in the propagation of the Gospel; and we argue from it, that there is no known machinery

which could supply the place of a standing ministry, ministering with full authority, and in structures set apart for the public service of God.

So that we can safely contend for the indispensableness, under the existing dispensation, of sanctuaries or churches, maintaining that cities, without these sacred edifices, would be cities that must ere long be wholly sunk in irreligion, and occupied by a population with no fear of God. There is more than theory on the side of this opinion, though the theory, as based on the word and ordinance of God, ought itself to suffice for conviction. But we have unhappily made the experiment, and are therefore in the position to add experience to theory; we suffered our population vastly to outgrow the means of religious instruction, so that parishes numbered thousands, whilst parish churches held but tens. And the large masses of human beings, for whom there were thus virtually no temples at all, became morally degraded, to an extent which it was fearful to survey. They sunk, we might almost say, to the level of the Pagans, the only thing which kept them from actual equality having been that influence which the existing Christianity puts forth, even on those who are without its pale, or who know nothing more of it than the name. But to the disease thus engendered, we have applied, in a measure, the instituted remedy. We have planted churches in the midst of these overgrown masses, and it is not too much to say, that, in the majority of instances, this bringing of the

neglected into contact with the ministrations of the Gospel, has done much towards overcoming profligacy, and reclaiming numbers who seemed hopelessly dissolute; so that, as though the want of a church had been like the want of the temple in Jerusalem, and with the building it religion had revived, the moral waste has given tokens of verdure, and borne rich fruits to the glory of God.

You are not therefore to think that we are guilty of any exaggeration, when we affirm that we can no better spare our churches than the Jews could their temple. I know that in a special manner was the religion of the Jews identified with their temple, so that Jerusalem without its temple, was not merely Jerusalem, it was the whole of Judea, incapacitated for the worship of Jehovah. And the prophet, as he wandered through the city, and found that the sacred edifice was not yet rebuilt, might have felt as though God must have departed from the land, seeing there was no place where the Shekinah might rest, no solemn recesses whence the voice or the glory of the Eternal might issue mysteriously forth. But practically and speedily, if not on the instant, would it also be to suspend religion amongst ourselves, were the land to become suddenly a land without churches. There will be no temples in heaven, none, at least, we are told by St. John, but the Lord God Almighty Himself, and the Lamb, because in heaven we shall not need any medium of communication; we shall not be taught through

intermediate agency; but, privileged to draw at once from the fountain, shall require not the channels which conveyed to us waters during the pilgrimage of life. But the very reason for the absence of churches from the heavenly city argues their necessity under the present dispensation: here we have no direct vision; we are placed without the veil, and cannot gaze on the uncreated; and we must therefore submit to an appointment which orders that we be instructed through certain means, and derive grace through certain channels. Take away, therefore, our churches, and you cut off our supplies. The very righteous will languish; and the unrighteous, no longer plied through the instrumentality of a standing ministry, will more and more throw off restraint, till the land becomes covered with wickedness, and has lost all that salt which now stays the progress of moral decomposition.

And in proportion as we allow any city, or any portion of our population, to be destitute of the public means of grace, we fasten on that city, or population, something of the same religious incapacity as was fastened on Jerusalem, whilst its temple lay in ruins. What moved the prophet, what excited his anger and grief, as he saw houses rising, and the temple not rebuilt? The consciousness that the inhabitants of those houses were not possessed of a mode of access to God, and that the want of a temple must debar them from serving Him acceptably, and growing acquainted with his

will. Therefore did he weep: he cared not that the city wanted the gorgeous pile, which might have completed its architectural beauty; but he cared that the citizens wanted the ordained instrumentality, through which they might worship and know the God of their fathers. And thus would it be with the Christian minister, who might look on a growing town, none of whose structures were consecrated to Christ, or on a spreading valley, rich in scattered villages, but those villages all wanting a church. He would not lament, because the town wanted its best diadem, the diadem of steeple and tower, or because the valley was without the richest of ornaments, the spire which points man to the sky, and seems to bid him to a heavenward flight; but he would lament, and bitterly lament, that the dwellers in that town, or that valley, must be destitute of the chief means of religious instruction; that practically no Sabbaths could break on them with their soothing and sanctifying influence, and that, wanting the instituted provision, through which righteousness may be upheld, and wickedness overcome, they must soon grow virtually into heathens, whatever had been the strength of their Christianity at first. And he might justly walk through that town, or make the round of that valley, upbraiding the inhabitants as men who were doing their best to weave an impenetrable moral darkness round themselves and their children. I see him stirred with a holy indignation as he looks upon mansions and shops and

warehouses and farms, but searches in vain for the house of his God. He goes into no lengthened statement of the enormity of those who have thus built for the body, and forgotten the soul. Enough that he can point to one kind of structure, but see no traces of another. And he has said sufficient to cover all whom he meets with confusion, because sufficient to prove them wilfully negligent of their highest, their everlasting interests, when he has cast his expostulation into the form of our text, "Is it for you, O ye, to dwell in cieled houses, and the house of the Lord to lie utterly waste?"

Now the principle which we may be said to have thus extracted from our text, is very simple and practical. The Jews are not blamed for having built their own houses, but for not having, at the same time, built the house of God. The thing implied is, that they ought either to have begun with the temple, dwelling in tents until that had been finished, or that, at least, the temple should have risen conjointly with the other parts of the city. And the principle derivable from this is, that, wheresoever there is the gathering together of human beings as a community, there ought to be in the midst of them a house devoted to God. We speak of this principle as fairly derivable, because we have already taken pains to show you that the difference between the Jewish and Christian dispensations, is not a difference which makes the temple less important under the Gospel than it was under the law.

We may make a Jerusalem of every town and every village, seeing that in every town and every village we may equally have the temple; but a town, or a village, which has not a church, is virtually what Jerusalem was, with its cieled houses, but the house of God lying waste.

So that there is contained in our text the great truth which the advocates of church extension are continually labouring to impress upon the public mind; namely, that a church ought to be planted on every spot, where there is peopled neighbourhood enough to furnish it with occupants; and that it is a grievous sin, a sin which must entail both present and future retribution, when a population is suffered to spread, with no commensurate spreading of the means of Christian instruction, to build themselves houses, yet to have no building for the worship of God, the hearing of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments. But whilst the text may be thus pointedly and forcibly applied to ourselves, because asserting that a certain proportion, if we may use the expression, should be maintained between church building and house building, we have not yet gone the whole length of the remonstrance; there is a further charge against the Jews, beyond that of merely making habitations for themselves, to the neglect of that of God; and we must see whether this further charge might not be made good against ourselves.

It is contained in the expression, "cieled houses,"

on which we have already remarked as indicating that the Jews had reared costly and luxurious dwellings, though, all the while, they were pleading that they were not in a condition to undertake the rebuilding of the temple. The thing which strikes the prophet, and on which, under the direction of God, he proceeds indignantly to comment, is, that whilst the temple lay in ruins, there were sumptuous structures to be seen in Jerusalem, structures which denoted the opulence of the inhabitants, and therefore proved that want of will alone caused the Lord's house to be waste. If the Jews had been living in temporary buildings, hastily constructed for the present emergency, it might at least have been a plausible statement, that they were yet too poor to raise up the sanctuary ; but when their houses were "cield houses," spacious and ornamented mansions, it was impossible to doubt that they had no heart for the building the temple, but were resolved to lavish on themselves the wealth which they were bound to have consecrated to God. And thus you have an argument, so to speak, in our text, against any country, where the sumptuousness of its secular buildings forms a contrast with the meanness of its religious. The argument hitherto has been, that a country is condemned if the number of its churches bear no just proportion to the number of its houses ; but now it is the character or style of the respective buildings which is appealed to in evidence ; and the

comparison lies between magnificent dwellings, and mean temples.

It cannot tell well for a land, if its opulence be more shown in other structures than in those which are devoted to the service of God. I know that the Almighty dwelleth not in temples made with hands, and that it is not the gorgeousness of architecture which will attract his presence, or fix his residence. I am well assured that He will come down as benignantly, and abide as graciously, when his servants have assembled in the rude village church, as when they occupy the splendid cathedral, with its storied aisles, and its fretted roof. But this has nothing to do with the question as to the propriety of our throwing splendour round our religious edifices, whensoever it is in our power to do so: the mean building may have the Shekinah within it, as well as the magnificent; but is this any reason why we should rear only the mean, if we have it in our power to rear the magnificent? I think not. God was content to have a tabernacle whilst his people were in the wilderness, or still harassed by enemies; but when He had given them abundance and peace, He required a temple, a temple of which David, when meditating the structure, could say, "The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical." And when this house rose, it was the wonder of the earth; the gold and the silver and the precious stones were lavished on its

walls; and the temple soared into the sky, a glorious mass, refulgent as though it had descended from above, rather than been raised by mortal hands. We forget not again the change of dispensation, when we derive from the splendour of the Jewish sanctuary an argument for the duty of beautifying the house of the Lord. But we do think, that when, with every token of approval, the Almighty took possession of a structure on which architecture had exhausted all its power, and wealth poured forth its treasures, He did give evidence that churches, inasmuch as they are buildings reared to his honour, ought to exhibit the opulence of the builders, and thus to be monuments of the readiness of piety to devote to the Lord the riches derived from his bounty.

We cannot take it as any wholesome symptom which is now to be observed in this country, that, whilst other structures are advancing in magnificence, churches are of a less costly style. If we compare ourselves with our ancestors, it may be said that we build more spacious and luxurious houses: if we want new exchanges, they shall be such as quite to throw the old into the shade; new houses of Parliament, they shall wonderfully outdo what the fire has destroyed; yea, even our hospitals and infirmaries, they shall be almost as palaces compared with those of olden days; but if we want new churches, they shall be as simple and unadorned as possible, contrasting strangely with the vaulted, and arched,

and richly-sculptured piles which a former age delighted to consecrate to God. Better, indeed, struggling as we are to overtake a redundant population, to have the two plain churches, than the one costly edifice: but there is wealth enough in the land, wealth displayed in the “cield houses” of every other kind, to admit of our churches being costly as well as numerous; and the question is, whether it will not at last tell against us as a people, that, whilst we were thus enabled to go beyond our ancestors in the magnificence of all other buildings, whether public or private, we adopted a more niggardly style in regard of our churches, as though it were unimportant, in respect either of God or ourselves, what kind of structure were set apart for the offices of religion.

It is not unimportant—not unimportant in respect of God; for if the church is his house, it ought, like the palace of a king, to bear as great proportion as we have power to effect to the majesty of the occupant. Not unimportant in respect of ourselves: who has not been conscious of the power of a cathedral—the power to excite lofty emotions and soaring thoughts—a power, as though arch and pillar were indeed haunted by Deity, so solemnizing and spirit-stirring are they, as they surround and canopy the worshippers, like the stately trunks and the clustering boughs of a forest, from whose depths come the utterances of God? It is vain to endeavour to make ourselves out independent on as-

sociations: we must be content to be material as well as spiritual, and not disdain the aids which a place of worship may give to the piety of the worshippers.

But, at the least, it cannot tell well for the religious feeling of a country, if there be parsimony in its churches, whilst there is profusion every where else. The churches—not the streets, not the squares, not the warehouses, not the docks, not the palaces—the churches ought to be the chief evidences, as well by their stateliness as their number, of the growing power and wealth of a Christian kingdom. We have nothing to say against the multiplication of spacious mansions, of lofty edifices in which commerce may hold her court, literature gather her votaries, or legislators debate. But woe must be unto a country, if, whilst all this goes forward, the house of the Lord be not enlarged, or enlarged only at the least possible expense, so that its courts shall want the splendour which every other structure exhibits. This is precisely the state of things so indignantly denounced in our text. It was this that called forth the expostulation of the prophet. And is it not to be seen amongst ourselves? Notwithstanding the vast efforts of the few last years, the amount of church accommodation, especially in the metropolitan and manufacturing districts, is very greatly in arrears of the amount of population; whilst the structures reared for public worship, reared under a necessity for rigid economy, are

certainly, to say the least, no monument that the national piety is eager to consecrate unto God the national wealth.

If you would contrast us with our ancestors, whether as to the number or character of our religious edifices, only compare what is called the city with more modern parts of our overgrown metropolis. The city is literally crowded with churches; their spires are a sort of forest; and the most of these ecclesiastical structures are of rare beauty and costly material; so that in many a narrow lane or obscure court may you find a solid and richly ornamented building, contrasting strangely with those by which it is surrounded; but the contrast only showing that our forefathers felt it both a duty and a privilege to devote the best to God, and to keep the inferior for themselves. But pursue your way to the more modern parts of the metropolis, and you have line upon line of stately mansions: a magician would seem to have been there, conjuring up a multitude of palaces, that all the wealth of the world might be magnificently housed,—but where and what, for the most part, are the churches? Alas, they do not crowd upon you as in the streets where the old citizens dwelt! You may wander comparatively long distances without meeting a church; and when one rises amid some gorgeous assemblage of the homes of nobles, or the halls of science, in place of excelling the city church in any thing of the proportion that the

modern mansion excels the ancient, it is commonly below, in all that can mark veneration of Deity, the deserted edifice where past generations worshipped and rest. And we want, therefore, to know, whether if a prophet were now to arise in the midst of us, he might not fairly address to us the very expostulation contained in our text. I see him walking our spacious streets; he cannot take a step without fresh evidence that we have wondrously advanced in all the comforts and luxuries of life; but he looks for proof that, along with this advance, there has been a growing manifestation of the national piety, a manifestation in that the number and sumptuousness of our churches at least keep pace with the number and sumptuousness of our dwellings: he looks in vain; and then, with a voice of indignation, a voice which should strike terror into all who remember that unto whom much is given, from them shall much be required, he exclaims to the passers by, "Is it time for you, O ye, to live in cieled houses, and this house lie waste?"

We have thus endeavoured to show you that our text, when taken under different points of view, is equally applicable to ourselves—applicable, first, as asserting a necessity that churches must be provided if religion is to be upheld; and, secondly, as making the display of opulence in other structures bear witness against the paucity and meanness of ecclesiastical. The Incorporated Society for pro-

moting the enlargement, building, and repairing of Churches and Chapels, now appeals to you, under the sanction of her Majesty's letter, for assistance in rolling off the reproach which lies on us as a people, in so far, at least, as that reproach results from the insufficiency of our church accommodation. The Society has done much, though but little, alas, in comparison of the wants of a rapidly augmenting population. It has now been twenty years in operation; and during that time it has assisted in providing additional church room for 435,000 persons, of which number the free and unappropriated sittings for the use of the poor are for 318,000. Surely this is a gratifying statement, that within twenty years 318,000 of the poor of the land should have been provided, without cost, with the means of Christian instruction,—318,000 who, apart from such provision, would have had scarcely any opportunity of hearing the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ:—this ought to be good tidings to all who love the Redeemer, and honestly desire the advancement of his kingdom.

For when every abatement is made, whether for defective attendance or defective ministration, it cannot be questioned, that, through this multiplication of churches, numbers, vast numbers, have been brought into acquaintance with truth, and into the diligent use of the ordinances of grace, who would otherwise have remained in spiritual ignorance,

virtually without God and without hope in the world. Indeed, if it once be admitted that it is through the public means of grace that God ordinarily acts in the conversion and edifying of men, no Christian can be content so long as there are men in the land who have not those means within reach; every Christian must rejoice in all such extension of the means as shall leave fewer and fewer beyond the pale of parochial superintendence. Do I consider that the mere planting of a church in a neglected neighbourhood will regenerate that neighbourhood? Do I assume as a matter of course, that, because a church has been built, the Gospel will be simply and faithfully preached? Far enough from this: I know that the church will not be filled, unless entrusted to a minister who will assiduously devote himself to the task of reclaiming the alienated people; and I know also how possible it is that the appointed minister may be deficient in the qualities which he ought to possess. But do I, on such accounts, regret the erection of the church, or conclude that no benefits result from the addition to the amount of church accommodation? Far enough from this; if the church be not immediately made as useful as it might, it is there for successive generations: one minister will pass away and another arise; and I cannot doubt, that, in the course of years, there will be the frequent and full publication of the Gospel of Christ; and that, too, in a place

where, but for this edifice, the glad tidings of salvation would never have been announced.

Neither, moreover, can we believe in the existence of any case in which there is actually no present good. We will venture to say that the church is never built in a destitute neighbourhood, which does not cause some to attend public worship who never attended it before. And it is a good—say what you will—that even a few should be brought to a better observance of the Sabbath, to the joining in the evangelical prayers of our Liturgy, to the hearing the Bible publicly read, and to the receiving the blessed sacraments of our faith. Besides, a church seldom, if ever, springs up without being speedily followed by schools; so that the young are brought under culture, and thus seed is sown which may yield, by the blessing of God, a rich moral harvest. In the least favourable case, therefore, we can rejoice that a church has been built, and regard it as associated with the best interests of the neighbourhood; whilst, in the majority of cases, there is no alloy whatever to the pleasure with which we contemplate a new place of worship: we know it, and we can prove it, a sort of centre of civilization, whence humanizing and elevating influences go out through a mass of our fellow-men, hitherto perhaps abandoned to ignorance and all its fearful concomitants—a focus from which diverge the rays of a moral illumination.

lighting up many a dark spot, and leading many a wanderer to the only refuge for the sinful and the lost.

You are now asked to contribute liberally towards this great work of multiplying churches. Applications for assistance are pouring in to the Incorporated Society, and its funds are literally exhausted. Manufacturing districts are crying for help: cities, towns, villages, all are eager to participate in the ministrations of the Established Church; though large masses of their inhabitants are now unavoidably excluded, through the want or the narrowness of churches. Support, then, the Establishment by increasing its power of doing good. Every church which is built is a new tower on its battlements. I know not whether the Establishment could have withstood recent and present assaults, had they been made some years ago, before there was any effort to increase church accommodation. But the Establishment has been so strengthened by the extension of her ministrations, that, by the blessing of God, she may defy her enemies. She has been strengthened, not by obtaining new pledges from a sovereign, or fresh patronage from nobles, but by giving thousands and tens of thousands of the poor a share in her services. She has thus rooted herself more deeply in the affections of the people: and let her only continue to hold the same course, making her ministrations

more and more commensurate with the growing demand, and thus increasingly proving herself, what no other body can even pretend to be, emphatically the poor man's church, and we can be confident that no weapon formed against her will prosper, but that her adversaries will compass their own shame and confusion.

I rejoice that, required as I am by duties in another place to leave you for the ensuing month, I should have had this opportunity of making an appeal to your Christianity and your churchmanship. I go to fulfil my engagement as select preacher before the university of Cambridge during the month of November; and I shall have to carry with me to that seat of learning, with which the well-being of the Established Church is indissolubly bound, fresh witness that those amongst whom God hath called me to labour, are firmly attached to that Church, persuaded of its worth, and bent on its support. Ye are not, ye will not be, of those who prefer their own luxury and aggrandizement to the glory of God, and the welfare of man. Ye are not, ye will not be, of those who may be taunted with living in their cieled houses, while the house of the Almighty lieth waste. Rather will ye resolve, and act on the resolution, that, so far as in you lies, the houses of God shall be multiplied in the land, till all, young and old, rich and poor, shall have ample opportunity of owning and praising Him as Creator

and Redeemer—yea, of magnifying Him for his countless mercies in words such as these which I now ask you to sing :

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below ;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

SERMON IX.¹

THE FINAL TEST.

MATT. XXV. 34—36.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

DURING the last week, the Church has called upon us to commemorate that great event, the Ascension of Christ; and her second lesson for this morning's service, though the coincidence is accidental, follows with singular appropriateness after such a commemoration. Having seen our Lord go up into heaven, having listened to angels declaring that He shall so come again in like manner, what portion of Scripture

¹ Preached at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, on behalf of the Charing Cross Hospital.

could be more suited to our next assembling than one which delineates under bold figures how the Son of man shall descend in his glory, and represents all nations as gathered before Him, that every man may be judged according to his works? And if the lesson might thus seem to have been chosen on purpose for the Sunday, you will allow that it is also peculiarly adapted to the occasion of my addressing you. Having to plead the cause of the sick and the destitute, whither can I better turn for motives to benevolence than to that grand sketch of the last assize, whence we learn that the test to which we shall be brought, when on trial for eternity, is that of our having shown love to others out of love to Christ? On every account, therefore, we could not long hesitate as to the subject of our present discourse. The text seemed chosen for us; and we have only to endeavour to follow out those trains of thought which it seems naturally to open.

We wish, however, in order to guard against any misapprehension of our succeeding statements, to premise a few remarks on the general doctrine which our Lord's words present, and which appears to be that of our portion hereafter being to be determined by our works here. We observe at once that it cannot be improper to speak of reward from God to man, seeing that it is expressly declared in Scripture of certain actions that they shall obtain, or shall not lose, their reward. The question, therefore, is, as to the sense in which reward can follow human

actions, and yet all the happiness men gain be, as the Scriptures represent it, the free gift of God. We throw away altogether the idea, that there can be any thing in the best works to make God man's debtor, or that man, whatever his doings, can have claim on the Divine justice as meriting good. It is confessedly impossible, from the very nature of the relation between the creature and the Creator, that God can be so advantaged by the actions of those He has made as to owe them any favour in return: and, therefore, the works of those most eminent for righteousness, can possess no merit, according to the general acceptation of the term; if they obtain reward at all, it cannot be reward to which their own worth entitles them. If this be borne in mind, there will be no difficulty in explaining how works may be rewarded, and yet all that men receive be purely gratuitous.

The only works which God approves, or which are good works in the Scriptural sense, are those which result from God Himself working in us by the energies of his Spirit. But if God, of his great mercy, be pleased to reward these works, assuredly, forasmuch as He is Himself the Author of these works, the reward is altogether of grace. What God rewards is his own work in us, and certainly, then, in rewarding, He bestows a free gift. There would be no obligation upon God to recompense human actions, not even those which exhibit most zeal for his glory, and most love to his name. But He is pleased to

offer certain blessings, on condition of our performing certain actions; and these blessings, thus offered, are precisely what rewards would be, if merit were not wholly out of reach. If therefore the actions be performed, then, though they have not deserved in the strict sense of the word, and though they have not been wrought by our own power, still, since God has been pleased to affix certain blessings to the performance, we may both say that these actions are rewarded, and that what they obtain is purely of grace. It is of grace, so long as what is obtained could not be claimed as a thing of right: and nevertheless it may be fairly called reward, so long as it follows as a consequence on the doing certain actions.

It will suffice to have made these few observations on the general doctrine which may be derived from our text,—a doctrine which is not incompatible with the fundamental tenet of justification by faith, seeing that good works spring naturally from faith, and are alike its fruit and its evidence; and which leaves man still indebted for every thing to God, seeing that from God comes the grace through which alone can be wrought any acceptable action.

But leaving these and the like references to the general doctrine involved in our text, we would now address you, in the first place, on the person by whom the last trial is to be conducted; and in the second place, on the test, or criterion, by which its sentences are to be settled;—the person, the one

Mediator between God and man; the test, the having fed the hungry, and visited the sick.

Now in our text it is "the King," one invested with regal sway, who is represented as carrying on the great business of the assize on human kind. But in a preceding verse, this King is spoken of as the "Son of man;" so that in the august form, before whom myriads upon myriads are assembled, we recognize that "man of sorrows," who "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." And we wish you here to consider the combined justice and mercy of the appointment, that He who is to decide our portion for eternity, is the very being who died as our surety. We suppose the end of all things to be come, the dead to have heard the voice of the archangel, so that small and great are hastening to judgment. We suppose that sublime and fearful vision, which was granted to the evangelist, now receiving its accomplishment. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." And who is it that sits upon this throne? Who is it by whose verdict the condition of untold myriads is to be eternally fixed, and whose single sentence is to determine whether everlasting happiness, or everlasting misery, shall be awarded to the several members of the vast human family?

It is a question of the first moment; for the thorough equity of the trial depends mainly on the character and capacity of the being who presides.

If you tell me that an angel, the highest and the holiest, occupies the judgment-seat, you do not satisfy me that every verdict will be rigidly just. I cannot believe of any finite being, that he knows so accurately every circumstance in the conduct of every individual of our race, that he can make no mistake in settling the portions of the millions upon millions, who throng to him for sentence. The wicked man may have hopes of eluding his penetration, and the righteous may have fears as to the extent of his powers of discrimination; and therefore, you may array this angel-judge with majestic attributes, and assign him every noble property in the highest perfection consistent with creatureship; but there can be no certainty, throughout that mighty assemblage which the graves have given up, that no crime shall escape detection, and nothing done for God be overlooked.

What then? shall the throne be occupied by Deity Himself? shall men appear before their Maker, and receive their doom from the Omniscient? Beyond all question, such an arrangement is not liable to those objections which seem to lie against the appointment of an angel as our judge. Nothing can escape the Omniscient; and therefore it is impossible that his decisions should be other than most rigidly impartial. The beings who are crowding up from the sepulchres, if told that He who created them, whose all-seeing eye has watched their every action, so that, in the deepest solitude, they have

been under his inspection, the very thoughts of the heart having been observed and registered—if told, we say, that this Omnipresent one, from whom nothing can be hidden, and by whom nothing can be forgotten, is about to sit in scrutiny on their conduct, and determine, accordingly, their everlasting state, will they not be fraught with a persuasion that every thing will be done by the strictest rules of equity, and that there will not be a solitary particular in the enormous sum of human doings, which shall be passed by without note, and without recompense? Yes, they must necessarily be persuaded of all this; and yet there would be a kind of shrinking from the tribunal, as though it were not that to which creatures like ourselves should be summoned. We confess the amazing dignity of the Judge. We own it impossible that any one should fail to receive at his hands the most exact retribution, that a single threatening, or a single promise, should not be made good, that hypocrisy should be undetected, or humility unobserved. But then, it is the very dignity of the Judge which confounds us. There is so unmeasured a separation between ourselves and the being by whom we shall be tried, that we cannot go with any confidence to his tribunal. He can have no sympathy with us. Of a different nature, a nature, too, which has nothing in common with the feebleness of our own, how is it possible that He should at all enter into our case, make allowances for our circumstances, and decide with a nice reference to

our capabilities and trials? O then for a Judge who can have something of a fellow-feeling with the parties to be judged. We shrink away from absolute Deity. We know not how the weak and the offending are to find access to one who has nothing in common with them, who has never experienced any of their cares, who has had none of their battles to fight, none of their sorrows to endure, none of their temptations to wrestle with. And how can such a Judge, with all his wisdom and all his justice, be a fit judge of fallen men?

But do we then ask that our judge should be man? Indeed, who but man can fully sympathize with man? And yet, if an angel be not qualified to sit in judgment on this world, how can a man be? A man may have the power of sympathy which an angel has not; but he is far inferior to the angel in those other properties which go to the constitution of a judge; and in those properties we were forced to pronounce even angels, the loftiest and most richly endowed, altogether deficient. So that, if we would determine who alone seems fitted to bear the office of Judge of this creation, we appear to require the insupposable combination, insupposable, we mean, so long as you shut us out from the Gospel, of the omniscience of Deity, and the feelings of humanity. We cannot dispense with the omniscience of Deity. We see clearly enough, that no finite intelligence can be adequate to that acquaintance with every iota of human conduct, which is essential to our being

certain of the thorough justice of future retribution. But then neither can we dispense with the feelings of humanity. At least, we can have no confidence in approaching his tribunal, if we are sure that a difference in nature incapacitates him for sympathy with those whose sentence he is about to pronounce, and precludes the possibility of his so making our case his own, as to allow of his deciding with due allowance for our feebleness and temptations.

Here, then, revelation comes in, and sets before us a Judge in whose person is that amazing combination which we have just pronounced as insupposable as indispensable. That man, by whom God hath ordained that He will judge the world in righteousness, is Himself Divine, the "Word that was in the beginning with God, and which was God." He shall come in human form, and every eye shall see him, "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh;" and they that pierced Him shall look upon Him, and recognize, through all his majesty, "the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Yet He who descends is equally the ever-living Creator; the angel and the archangel, by whom He is surrounded, adore Him as "from everlasting and to everlasting," "the beginning and the end," the infinite, the self-existent. In his person, then, is that marvellous union which we seek in the Judge of the whole human race. He is God, and therefore must He know every particular of character, every action, every motive, every thought, every word; so that there

cannot rest suspicion on any of his verdicts : He cannot be imposed on by the show of piety, and He cannot overlook it where real. But then He is also man ; He has Himself been a sojourner upon earth : He has borne my griefs, and wept my tears, and experienced my trials ; and therefore will He put Himself into the situation of those who are brought to his bar ; He will know exactly what they have had to contend with, and be able to adjust each sentence to the opportunities and capabilities of the party on whom it is passed. Are we not therefore assured that mercy and justice will alike have full scope in the transactions of the Judge, and that, in appointing that the Mediator who died as our substitute, should preside at our trial for eternity, God hath equally provided that every decision should be impartial, and yet every man be dealt with as brother to Him who must determine his fate ?

It is, we think, one of the most beautiful of the arrangements which characterize the Gospel, that the offices of Redeemer and Judge meet in the same person, and that person Divine. We call it a beautiful arrangement, as securing towards us tenderness as well as equity, the sympathies of a friend as well as the disinterestedness of a most righteous arbiter. Had the Judge been only man, the imperfection of his nature would have made us expect much of error in his verdicts. Had He been only God, the distance between Him and ourselves would have made us fear it impossible, that, in deter-

mining our lot, He would take into the account our feebleness and trials. The hypocrite might have hoped to baffle the penetration of the man; the lowly and afflicted, conscious of frequent transgressions, of broken vows, of inconsistencies and backslidings, might have been appalled by the perfections of the Godhead. It would have been an encouragement to wickedness, had the Judge been mere man, and therefore liable to be deceived; it would have filled humble piety with dread, had the Judge been only God, and therefore not to be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities."

But now the grave shall yield up its countless population, and no one, throughout the vast assemblage of creatures awaiting their trial, shall have a word to object against the fitness of the being who occupies the judgment-seat. The bold transgressor, who lived on in rebellion, despite every remonstrance, and who died the impenitent, he shall know that awful form on the throne of fire and cloud, and long to screen himself beneath the mountain and the rock that he might escape the trial and the sentence—but not because he can impeach the judicial qualities of the arbiter before whom he must appear; oh, only because the book of his own conscience has been opened, and from its pages is poured forth a torrent of accusation, and he knows that the being about to judge him, is the very being who endured agony for him, and shed blood for him; and because, therefore, he also knows that there is no plea which can

be urged against his utter condemnation, no subterfuge by which he may escape: mercy exhausted itself, and was despised; what then shall arrest justice, or procure acquittal for the guilty? The believer in Christ who hearkened to the suggestions of God's Spirit, and brake away from the trammels of sin, he too shall know the Son of man, as He comes down in the magnificent sternness of celestial authority. And whatever his emotions, as the inconceivably tremendous scene is spread before him and around him, he will be assured and comforted as he gazes on the Judge, and beholds in Him the Mediator who counted nothing too precious to be given for his ransom. He will remember that he has entered into covenant with that majestic personage, before whom the human race is being marshalled. And, therefore, as the wicked shall seek to hide themselves from the Judge, as knowing Him so fitted for the office that they cannot escape, so the righteous shall go in hope and confidence to his tribunal, regarding Him as their surety, and certified of his sympathy. Thus each class, the one by the passionate cry to the rock and the mountain, the other by that holy assurance which proves that it takes to itself the words of the prophet, "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us;" each class, we say, furnishes evidence how just, and yet how merciful, is the appointment of the Redeemer of all to be Judge of all; and tells out, in accents which shall be

understood and felt by those eager spectators who flock from every quarter of creation to behold and approve the dealings of their God, that it must indeed be in righteousness that the world shall be judged, seeing that it is none other than the Mediator, who, as King upon the throne, shall pronounce the words, "Come, ye blessed," and "Depart, ye cursed."

But we would now turn your attention on the test or criterion furnished by our text. You see that the alone reason given why one set of men should enter the kingdom and another be excluded is, that the former have, and the latter have not, relieved the distressed. The character of the final portion is made dependent on nothing but the having fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and visited the sick : those who have thus ministered to Christ in his members going away into life eternal, and those who have not thus ministered being, on that account, given over to everlasting punishment. And it becomes a great question, how the poor, who have nothing to bestow, can pass a trial whose criterion thus seems to presuppose an ability to bestow ; and how that large bulk of a community, who appear necessitated to continue in the class of receivers, can, by any the most unremitting strivings, bring themselves within the condition laid down for the obtaining the blessedness of immortality. The having relieved the necessitous seems made indispensable to the escaping the fire and reaching the glory : whereas, to all appearance, nine out of ten are disqualified,

and that, too, through no fault of their own, for lightening the pressure of other men's trials, and thus, if the sentences be according to the criterion, for securing to themselves the "Come ye blessed" at the judgment. If the man who labours with his hands can succeed in making such an overplus by his labours, that he has something to give to the destitute, it is clearly possible for him to satisfy that test which is furnished by Christ's sketch of his assize on the nations. But if—and this case is of constant occurrence—though he toil with unwearied industry, he can never gain a fraction more than bare sufficiency, and thus never have the power of assisting poorer brethren, it may be hard for him to see how he can stand in a position of acceptance, when the Judge makes inquisition as to the food and the clothing which have been dealt out to the needy. We desire, if possible, to elucidate this point. We are wholly against the opinion, that the power of being charitable is limited to the richer classes, and that none but those who have at least something more than a sufficiency can administer to the wants of the sick and the necessitous. We contend that the making such a limitation would be tantamount to ascribing an undue privilege to the possession of wealth, seeing that it would represent the rich man as enabled, by his riches, to prepare himself for the enquiries of the last judgment, at an absolute and scarce measurable advantage over the poor man, whose labour only just secures him a

livelihood. And can it be that the possessor of money is thus on a vantage ground as compared with its nonpossessor, when both are regarded as candidates for immortality? If it be true, as we learn from the Bible, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," are we to conclude that by the disposition of external advantages, God has shut out the great body of Christians from all ability of reaching the superior blessedness of the giver, and fastened them indissolubly to the inferior of the receiver? On the contrary, we shall not hesitate to say, that the poor man may be the giver just as well as the rich, though his every farthing be required for the keeping off starvation from his household, so that the produce of his labour is never such as to allow of his giving a suffering neighbour one jot of assistance.

We take the case of the peasant or mechanic, who rises early and late takes rest, and who by most strenuous exertions, and by submitting to constant privation, just contrives to support his young family without applying to the parish, or appealing to private bounty. It is quite possible that hundreds, who have no greater difficulties to struggle with, will not be content to wear themselves down by the same toil, and undergo the same hardships, and will therefore degrade themselves into paupers, and go to the parish-board, or solicit aid from the wealthy. But the high-minded man to whom we have referred, determines, and acts out the determination, that unless sickness incapacitate him for labour, or

the means of procuring a virtuous sufficiency be put absolutely beyond reach, he will neither burden the poor-rate nor take help from the charitable. Now what we ask of you is, does this man give away nothing in charity? Is he shut out from the being liberal and benevolent by the circumstance that the sum total of the proceeds of his labour is but just equal to the sum total of the demands of his household? We can never admit this. The peasant, indeed, must say, "Silver and gold have I none;" and therefore of silver and gold can he give none. But if he give not gold and silver, he gives bone and sinew. He pays to the poor-rate exactly that amount which, had he been a little less industrious and noble spirited, he might have drawn from the poor-rate. He throws into the funds of private benevolence precisely that sum which, had he chosen to accept the bounty of the wealthy, he might have extracted for himself, and obtained for his own family. The rich merchant contributes to the support of our destitute population by paying so much out of his superfluities to a poor-rate. But the hard labourer, who struggles unweariedly that he may not be a burden on that rate, is also a contributor to the support of the destitute, and that too by paying the tax with the sweat of his brow and the stretch of his muscle. The opulent noble lightens much of the affliction of his neighbourhood by carrying or sending relief to the sick and the starving. But he is rivalled in this benevolent work by the pale and

almost worn down artizan, who never applies to him for help, and who therefore leaves him at liberty to transmit to other objects of charity that amount of assistance which his own tale of hardship would have won for himself.

We think it to be as clear as though established with all the rigour of a mathematical demonstration, that the man who will not receive what his distresses and hardships might have entitled him to receive from the funds, whether of public or private benevolence, is a giver to those funds of precisely the sum of which, had he chosen, he might have been the receiver. Neither are we casting any slur upon those of the poor whose necessities compel them to subsist, either in whole or in part, upon charity. We do not necessarily exclude even these from the class of givers. One man may use extra labour, in order that he may avoid asking any help; and then he is a giver to the amount of that assistance which he must have solicited had his industry been less intense. Another, who in spite of every exertion cannot earn enough, may take pains to do with the least possible help; and then he is a giver to the amount of that assistance which, with a less unflinching economy, his wants would have demanded. He who by the toil of limb keeps himself altogether from the list of paupers, contributes just so much to the relief of the poor as, without that toil of limb, must have been bestowed upon himself. And in like manner, he for whose wants the toil of limb cannot bring suffi-

ciency, but who, by the toil of carefulness, makes shift to do with the smallest quantity of help, he contributes just so much to the relief of the poor as, without this toil of carefulness, must have been abstracted on his own account from the revenues of charity. What then? can ye think that when at the judgment there shall go forward an investigation of the deeds of benevolence by which Christians have proved the sincerity of their faith, none but the better classes of society, whose means have outrun their own wants, will be able to submit themselves to the appointed criterion? or that, whilst nobles may appeal to hospitals founded or sustained by their ancestral revenues, and merchants show how their purses, heavy with the gains of commerce, were always open at the cry of the needy, the virtuous peasant who has wrestled like a giant with poverty, and scorned, whilst there was sight in his eye and strength in his limb, to touch a stiver of the funds which belonged to the destitute, must shrink back as one unable to reply otherwise than in the negative to the question, "Hast thou given bread to the hungry, and covering to the naked?" He has given: he has been a giver in not having been a receiver.

So that we show you that the lower ranks of society are no more excluded than the higher from the alleged blessedness of givers; and that those who seem to you to have nothing to bestow, may as well abide, at the last, a scrutiny into ministrations to the

necessitous, as others who have large incomes at their disposal, and can take the lead in all the bustle of philanthropy. Ay, and we reckon it a beautiful truth, that, from the fields and workshops of a country may be sent to the platform of judgment the most active and self-denying of the benevolent; and that, however in this world the praise of liberality is awarded only to those who can draw out their purses and scatter their gold, our labourers and artizans may be counted hereafter amongst the largest contributors to the relief of the afflicted. The donations which they have wrung from overtaxed limbs, or which they may be said to have coined out of their own flesh and blood, may weigh down in the balances of the judgment the more showy gifts which the wealthy dispense from their superfluities, without trenching, it may be, on their luxuries—yea, and thus is there nothing to prove to us that there may not be poured forth from the very hovels of our land, numbers who shall as well abide the searching enquiries of the Judge, as the most munificent of those who have dwelt in its palaces, and be as justly included within the summons, “Come ye blessed of my Father,” though none are to be thus addressed but such as have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and succoured the sick.

Now there is much in the fact which we thus set before you, the fact that God has not granted to the wealthy the monopoly of benevolence, which should move you to great liberality towards the

indigent, lest you find yourselves at last outdone in charity by the very poor whom you succour. You see that the man who endows an alms-house out of a well-stocked purse, has a formidable rival in almsgiving in the mechanic who struggles night and day to keep out of that alms-house. It is quite possible that he who reared the asylum, and put over it his coat of arms, may be far lower down at the last in the list of the charitable than he who, rather than claim the succour of that asylum, wore away old age in toil and privation.

There is much also in the considerations which have been advanced, to urge you specially to support institutions which afford succour to the industrious in a season of trouble. We feel that in striving to raise the character of a population, and to restore that healthy tone which exists wherever charitable aid, in place of being coveted and sought, is but resorted to in some singular emergencies, we make an effort which, if successful, would lift this population into a higher moral, as well as a higher physical, position. If I can prevail on a man, by working an additional hour, though he already work many, or by undertaking an additional task, though he have already much upon his hands, just to prevent the necessity of his seeking aid from the wealthy, why, I do that man a vast spiritual benefit: I detain him within the class of givers, when he may be actually on the point of passing over to that of receivers; and thus arrest him in his intention of throwing

away that power of ministering to the necessities of others which he possesses as actually, if not as abundantly, as though he ranked amongst the nobles of the land.

And we estimate therefore the worth of charitable institutions by their tendency to check pauperism, and give encouragement to industry. Hence we always plead with great confidence for an Hospital, an Infirmary, or a Dispensary, because we know that such establishments cannot multiply the objects which they propose to relieve. An asylum for want may produce want; but the like cannot be said of an asylum for sickness. And whilst there is no tendency in an Hospital to the encouragement of pauperism, there is a tendency the very strongest to the encouragement of industry. The Hospital affords a shelter to the mechanic or peasant at those seasons when no exertions of his own can suffice for his wants; and then sends him back to his labour in renovated health, and with his resolve to toil cheerfully, strengthened by the consciousness, that if sickness overtake him, he has a home to which to turn. Thus, in place of there being any likelihood that the assistances of an Hospital will transfer a man from the class of givers to that of receivers, there is every probability that they will strengthen the independent labourer in his resolve to provide for himself whilst in health, because they remove the pressure of that anxiety which he might naturally feel in the prospect of sickness.

We are sure, then, that the claims of an Hospital must always strongly commend themselves to an enlightened philanthropy. We are sure also that amongst the numerous institutions of this kind which do honour to our Metropolis, none is more worthy your support than the Charing Cross Hospital, for which I now plead. It is indeed of but recent erection: but, on this very account, it more needs your help; for it has not yet had time to accumulate a single farthing of capital, so that it is still altogether dependent on voluntary contributions. And that an Hospital was not instituted in this neighbourhood before it was needed, is proved by the simple fact, that, during the last year, nearly 6000 sick were admitted on its books, of which 1200 have been actually received within its walls. But until the Hospital shall be able to fund property, its operations will be necessarily limited and precarious; and we do not know a nobler thing which any of our great capitalists could do, than the providing so admirable an institution with a fitting endowment. I never before had to plead for an Hospital so circumstanced. The other Hospitals whose cause I have advocated, had their estates or their consols to fall back upon, if subscriptions diminished; and I could not feel that there would be necessarily an immediate rejection of applicants for admission, if my appeal were not liberally answered. But the case is now different. I am now actually asking for the means of receiving that father of a family whom

accident has disabled, or that mother, who, with wasted cheek, entreats succour for herself or her child. It is literally with you to determine whether the doors of the Hospital shall be closed on that emaciated thing; and you have only to be scant in your donations, and there shall soon be a widow, to whom a little more liberality might have preserved the husband of her youth, and an orphan who, had you shown yourselves more benevolent, might still have enjoyed the protection of a parent. The case therefore is peculiar. I could almost wish that I had not undertaken the advocacy: I have the sick and the dying actually in charge; and if I do not thoroughly adduce the motives to relieving them—for I know that you need nothing else to the being stirred to give largely—I shall literally have to accuse myself of depriving numbers of medical succour, and of consigning them to unassuaged pain, and perhaps even to an untimely grave.

No marvel, then, if I dare not conclude without another allusion to the dread things of judgment. The sick and the dying will not acquit me of unfaithfulness, but will rather haunt me reproachfully, if, with such a subject of discourse, I do not again bring you before the great white throne, and implore of you now to act as you will wish to have acted, when the trumpet shall have sounded, and the sea and the desert shall give up their dead. Not that you are to purchase Heaven by deeds of benevolence—perish the thought—there may be founders of

Hospitals, and builders of Churches, in that outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. But though no man can be saved by his works, every man shall be judged according to his works. If he have believed upon Christ—and this is the single ordained mode of salvation—the sincerity of his faith will be proved by his works; and therefore, in being appointed to everlasting life, he will be judged according to his works. If he have not relied on the merits of the Saviour, the want of faith will be evidenced by the deficiency in works; and therefore will he also, in being consigned to everlasting misery, be judged according to his works. It is then quite possible that a man may be liberal to the necessitous, and not from the Scriptural motive, but from ostentation, or at best natural kindness; and assuredly his liberality shall not open for him that gate which is closed against all but true followers of Christ. But if a man be not liberal, according to his ability, to the necessitous, it is quite certain that he wants what alone will gain him entrance into Heaven; and we may pronounce him excluded because he closed his ear against the cry of the poor.

Thus, with no compromise of sound Protestant doctrine, but leaving in its integrity the great truth of justification by faith, we can go with you to the tribunal of God, and declare your portion determined by the mode in which you responded to such appeals as the present. This our assembling will not termi-

nate when, a few minutes hence, this congregation shall disperse. Sabbaths die not; sermons die not. They pass away, but only to be entered in the great register of God, and to revive on the strange day of the Easter of this creation. The voice of the destitute and suffering, which is now heard only as the plaintive moan, and the faint cry of pain, supplicating succour, shall be heard once more amid all the magnificent confusion of falling stars and dislocated systems—heard as a wild call for vengeance on the penurious, who were not to be moved to the showing kindness to the afflicted. Yes, it shall be thus heard, and the vengeance which it invokes must descend upon many—but not, we think, upon you. The sick may be comforted: they are not to be deserted; they are not appealing to the churlish and hardhearted. We have pleaded their cause feebly; we have omitted many motives, and not given to others all their strength; but ye have hearkened to words borne to you from the far depths of the future, words syllabing the rule by which the last trial shall proceed—and what were these words? Great Judge of quick and dead, we have heard Thee calling to those who have fed the hungry and visited the sick, and saying to them, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

SERMON X.¹

THE LOST SHEEP.

LUKE xv. 3—5.

“And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.”

You may remember that another parable is added to that which we have just read, and of precisely the same import. A woman, possessed of ten pieces of silver, is represented as losing one piece, and as searching with great diligence till she find it. She then calls together her friends and her neighbours, that they may rejoice with her at the success of her enquiries. The truth which Christ infers from each parable, or rather the truth which He illustrates by each, is the same—namely, that there is greater joy

¹ Preached at St. Olave's, Southwark, on the 18th of June, on behalf of the Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum.

in Heaven over one repentant sinner, than over a company of the righteous who need no repentance. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, where the parable on which we purpose to discourse is somewhat differently put, the express assertion is, that if the man find the lost sheep, he rejoiceth more of it than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. We shall take the statements of the two Evangelists promiscuously, according as they may best suit our purpose. We may safely assume that these parables are to be regarded as illustrative of God's dealings with our race; descriptive in some respects of that plan of Redemption which Christ came to execute. It is sufficiently evident that Christ designed to point out Himself as seeking the sheep that had gone astray, or the piece of money which was lost. And therefore we cannot doubt that He also designed to fix attention on the whole scheme of human rescue, as arranged for the gathering back a solitary tribe into companionship with the unfallen ranks in creation. We ask your serious attention to a simple review of the parable of which we have read you a part, and of the truth which it inculcates, on the supposition that the design of its delivery was what we have just stated.

Now we are always to remember, that out of condescension to the weakness of our faculties, and not because of the accuracy of the delineation, God is often represented to us in Scripture as acting on human principles, and moved by human affections.

Thus in the parable before us He is exhibited as actuated by a feeling, which, however natural amongst ourselves, can scarcely have place in such a being as the Divine. We undoubtedly attach great value to any thing which we lose, and think little in comparison of what we still retain. The loss appears to stamp a greater worth than the possession, and if we regain what had slipped from our grasp, we are disposed to regard it as a hundred-fold more precious than before. We cannot think that precisely the same feeling has place in the Divine nature. If any thing which He loves be withdrawn from God, there cannot be that uncertainty as to its recovery, that ignorance where it may be found, and that consequent diligence of search, which combine to the producing great delight in ourselves, when we recover a good which we had lost.

But when we have cautioned you against the supposing in Deity emotions which, by their nature, can belong only to humanity, we may proceed to regard the figurative representation as the nearest to the truth which the case will admit. It may not be denied, that whatever be God's feelings on gathering home those who have wandered from obedience, they cannot be identical with those of the man who finds amongst the mountains the one sheep which had strayed. But nevertheless there may be no case in the workings of human sympathy which furnishes so apt an illustration; and though

God cannot be said to lose and recover, in the sense which such expressions bear amongst men, we can readily believe that we come nearest to what is felt by the Creator, when erring creatures are reclaimed, by ascribing to Him the sensations produced in ourselves on regaining what has wandered away. These considerations being premised, in order that you may be guarded against misapprehensions, we proceed to consider our Maker as proprietor of the hundred sheep, and man as the solitary one who has departed from the fold.

You are none of you, it may be, ignorant how the seeming insignificance of this planet, and of ourselves its inhabitants, has been turned into an argument against the truth of our Redemption; so that, setting in contrast the littleness of the human race, and the vastness of the machinery said to have been used for its rescue, men have asked whether it be credible that the Son of God humbled Himself and died for so inconsiderable a section of his unlimited empire? We are not about to expose, by any laboured reasoning, the fallacy of this argument. But we wish you to observe how it sets itself against a principle which God has undoubtedly implanted in the very highest of his creatures, and of which therefore we may reasonably believe, that it has a counterpart in his own nature. And this is the principle of a possession appearing more precious just at the instant of its loss; of its engaging every solicitude for its recovery, and of its causing, when regained, a

yet deeper gladness than is produced by those which have never been endangered. It may be true, that the Almighty had formed many worlds, and peopled each with intelligent beings, and that this earth was the solitary wanderer from an orbit of obedience. It may be true, that within the fold of the heavenly Shepherd were gathered rank upon rank of happy and righteous creatures, and that there was but one alien, one sheep which had forsaken the ever fresh pastures, and gone away to the desert or the mountain. But the fact that there was only one wanderer, only one apostate, is no evidence to us that God might be expected to abandon that one to wretchedness and ruin. That the ninety and nine sheep were yet safe in the fold, carries no conviction to our minds, that the Shepherd would care nothing for the single one which had strayed. We have the principle of our text to set against such theory. We know that this would not be the case with ourselves. We are assured that this would not be the case with the highest angels. And we feel that there is every reason to conclude, that a principle, which is to be found at the very summit of creature-ship, must have a principle which corresponds to it in the Divine nature itself.

We can therefore quite believe—at least, who shall show us any thing incredible in the supposition?—that when the lonely planet had wandered into a region of storm and eclipse, the Creator was not satisfied with beholding the worlds upon worlds

which still walked their pathways of light, and with listening to that melodious hymn, which flowed from the unbroken harmony of their movements. We can quite believe that it was not enough for a being of unbounded beneficence, that there was but one instance, in all the expanse of his dominions, of a race which had won misery for its heritage; and that every where, save in one inconsiderable spot, happiness had its home amongst the works of his hands. We can believe that the heart of the father went out after the prodigal child; and that the thoughts of the shepherd were with that one member of the flock which was far away in darkness and danger; and that the affections of the Creator followed that race which had left his guardianship, and dared his displeasure. And though it were indeed an overbold statement, that, unless informed by Revelation, we could have supposed such amazing arrangements as have actually been made for the recovery of the sheep that was lost, we may yet declare that we see no cause for surprise in the fact, that we were not left to perish; that we see only the workings of a principle which must exist in Deity, and which, wheresoever it exists, will produce great endeavours. We will not say that we could at all have computed on the Good Shepherd giving his life for the sheep; on the employment of means so costly and stupendous as those of the Incarnation and Atonement, for the restoring a lost world to its original position. But when the scheme is made known;

and when especially, with all its vastness, we cannot prove it more than commensurate with the exigencies of our condition—oh, we can find no cause for doubt or disbelief, in the alleged insignificance of man. We are not to be persuaded that this globe was too inconsiderable a spot, in comparison with the vast spreadings of immensity which were yet occupied by the holy and happy, to have engaged, in its alienation, the solitudes of its Maker. We know that what is still in possession, though it be the large and magnificent, appears as nothing when compared with what is lost, though in itself the poor and unimportant. Therefore can we feel confident of the truth of a record, which declares that our race has been the object of a mighty interference; ay, and we can quite think, that, when the Shepherd had gone among the mountains, and had succeeded, though after much toil and agony, in reclaiming the wanderer, then not only were the heavenly hosts moved to greater rapture than when surveying the flock which had never left the fold, but the great Proprietor Himself, experiencing a new delight in the return of the prodigal, might be likened to a man, who, having recovered the one sheep he had lost, “rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.”

But now it may be said, if there be a principle in Deity leading Him to rejoice more of the one sheep He has recovered than of the ninety and nine which never wandered, it is unaccountable that He brought

not back the fallen angels to his fold. It is always to be remembered that men were not the leaders in rebellion: they were not the first sheep that went astray from their shepherd. And if indeed there be a new preciousness attached by danger or loss to any thing which is beloved, so that the owner is more gladdened by its recovery than by all his undisturbed possessions, how shall we explain the absence of endeavour on the part of the universal Parent to gather back those children who first left their home? Had both angels and men been left beneath the curse which disobedience had provoked, or had both been objects of Divine interposition, there would have been such uniformity in the proceedings of the Creator as, on either supposition, would have seemed in accordance with the fixed principles of his nature. But that one should have been taken and the other left,—we cannot deny that this is apparently inconsistent with the truth, that God regards all his creatures with unbounded affection, and that if any one of his creatures have placed itself in peril, it gains thereby a new worth in his sight, and a new hold on his sympathy.

This is one of those difficulties upon which, since Revelation is silent, it becomes us not to advance explanatory suppositions. But, nevertheless, it does not militate against the existence of such a principle in Deity as would cause greater joy over the recovered sheep than over the ninety and nine which went not astray. There is, perhaps, after all, in

place of diversity, a striking analogy between God's dealings with angels and his dealings with men. It was only a part of the angelic race which fell; it was the whole of the human. Hence the first rebellion abstracted not from the heavenly fold one order of beings, whereas the second rebellion did. And as the Almighty left some angels to perish, whilst He confirmed others in their dignity and happiness, will He not leave some men to perish, whilst He advances others to glory and blessedness? He has taken means for bringing home the wandering race: but this prevents not that many individuals of that race die in the wilderness, and never re-enter the fold. And thus also with the angelic race—He took means, we may not doubt, for retaining this race within the circles of his favour; but this prevented not that many of its individuals turned aside from obedience and incurred his displeasure. In each case the owner has to rejoice over a portion of the race, but in neither over the whole. And though it may seem to us marvellous that mercy should not have rejoiced against judgment when angels transgressed, and that no Shepherd should have gone forth to seek and to save what was lost, let us at least bear in mind that men may remain exiles, even though redeemed; so that God's dealings with ourselves are not such as insure necessarily our restoration to the fold. Indeed, no Mediator hath interposed on behalf of mighty spirits which kept not their first estate. They are left on the fiery

mountains of wrath and tribulation; and those mountains have not been traversed by the Shepherd seeking the wanderers. But nevertheless there is a great analogy between the conditions of the whole angelic and of the whole human race, seeing that in neither case does God suffer that an order of creatures should be withdrawn from his dominion, and yet in each case allows that individuals of that order may remain in alienation.

We are not, therefore, to be moved by what is told us of the abandonment of Satan and his associates, to doubt the special outgoings of the Creator's affection towards the prodigal and the wayward. We find nothing in the instance to warrant a denial that to Deity, as well as to the beings whom He hath formed, a possession, when endangered or lost, appears more precious than when in safe keeping. And thus, though angels were cast out from heaven, and no arrangements made for their being restored, we still believe, that when God had provided for the gathering back our wandering race to Himself, and there was certainty as to the glorious results of new heavens and a new earth succeeding to those which sin had profaned, and of myriads of the apostate race becoming kings and priests unto Him against whom they had rebelled, then were there such emotions excited in our Maker as are best, though at best but imperfectly, described by declaring, that, looking upon men, and on the countless ranks which had kept their allegiance, He

was like the man who, finding the sheep he had lost, "rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray."

But it might be inferred from the parable under review, when thus taken as delineating the workings of Divine sympathy, that repentance is preferable to virtue, and that God is better pleased with those who first wander and then return, than with others who have never left their Father's house. We are sure that this is not a correct inference, however naturally it may seem to be deduced. We cannot doubt that, whatever the pleasure with which God welcomes back the prodigal, He does not regard him with greater favour than the obedient son who never went astray. We suppose this truth to be taught in that somewhat obscure portion of the parable of the prodigal son which relates the conduct of the elder son on finding how the wanderer had been welcomed. The elder son complains that there should be such demonstrations of joy on the return of a prodigal, whereas there had been no tokens of approbation in regard to himself, though, through many years, he had never transgressed his father's command. The father does not deny that he had been uniformly obedient, but shows, if we may use such expression, that he was better off than the younger son, whose return had been the occasion of the offensive rejoicing. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead

and is alive again, and was lost and is found." The advantage is here certainly affirmed to be on the side of the son who had remained with the father, and not of him who had wandered and then repented. There were signs of great joy at the recovery of one who had been thought hopelessly lost; and the occasion warranted the manifestation of feeling. But it did not follow that the father regarded the prodigal with the approval and affection of which he would have been the object, had he never departed from his home. On the contrary, it is the elder son who has the chief share in his favour and possessions. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." So that the parable, whilst offering every encouragement to a prodigal if he will arise and go to his father, is far enough from representing repentance as more acceptable to God than uniform obedience. You cannot read the parable of the prodigal son, and conclude from the readiness and gladness with which he is received, that it would have been better for the elder son had he joined his brother in his dissoluteness. The parable does every thing to induce you to return home, if it find you the prodigal. But since, notwithstanding the music and dancing with which the wanderer is welcomed, it still assigns to the elder son the more blessed portion, you are taught that, whatever the joy with which God receives home an exile, He rests with the greatest complacency on those of his creatures who have never transgressed.

In like manner, you may not affirm of the parable under review, that its representations at all give the preference to repentance over uniform obedience. Indeed, there is greater joy over the lost sheep when found, than over the ninety and nine which went not astray. But we are not told that the shepherd loves the lost sheep better than the rest, so that the wanderer has gained by his wanderings. We are told that the recovery of the one ministers more to the gladness of the owner than the permanence of the ninety and nine; but we are not told that if we would secure a large measure of favour and affection, it is better to be for a time the prodigal than always the obedient.

And in truth we may learn, from the workings of human affection, that the rejoicing more of the lost sheep than of the ninety and nine, proves not that the one is more beloved than the rest. If one member of his family be in sickness or danger, does not that one seem almost to engross the heart of the parent? are not the other members comparatively forgotten, so completely, for a while, are the thoughts absorbed in the suffering individual? It is not—and the fathers and the mothers amongst you know that it is not—that the sick child is better loved than those which are in health. It is not that your affections are more centered on the son who is far away amid the perils of the deep than on those who are sitting safely at your fireside. It is only that danger causes you to feel a special interest for

the time in some one of your offspring—an interest which, for the most part, ceases with the occasion, and which would be immediately transferred to another of the family, if that other were the subject of the peril. Oh, we quite believe that the mother, gazing on the child who seems about to be taken from her by death, is conscious of a feeling of passionate attachment which does not throb within her as she looks on her other little ones sleeping in their unbroken healthfulness. And if disease be suddenly arrested, and the child over whom she had wept in her agony smile on her again, and again charm her with its prattle, why we are persuaded that she will rejoice more of that child than of its brothers and its sisters, over whose beds she has never hung in anguish. Yet it is not that the one is dearer to her than the others. The probability of losing the one, whilst the others were safe, has caused a concentration of her solitudes and anxieties. But her heart is all the while as thoroughly devoted to those who need not the same intenseness of her maternal care; and you have only to suppose the sickness from which one child has recovered seizing on another, and presently you will see her centering on this other the same eager watchfulness; and for a time will there be again the same apparent absorption of the affections: and if again there be restoration to health, oh, again there will be the manifestations of an exuberant gladness, and the mother will rejoice more of the boy or the girl, who

has been snatched back from the grave, than of those members of her household who have not approached its confines. But not, we again say, because she loves one child better than the rest,—not because the healthful must become the sick, in order to their being cherished and prized. Whatever her rapture on being told “thy son liveth,” the mother would far prefer the deep and unruffled tranquillity of a household not visited by danger and disease.

And thus also with regard to moral peril, which brings the case nearer to that of the parable under review. If one member of a family grow up vicious and dissolute, whilst the others pursue stedfastly a course of obedience and virtue, it is not to be disputed that the thoughts of the parents will almost be engrossed by their profligate child, and that the workings of anxious affection will be more evident in regard of this prodigal than of the sons and the daughters who have given them no cause for uneasiness. Is it that they love the reckless better than the obedient? is it that they would love the obedient better, if they were turned into the reckless? You know that this is no true account of the matter. You know that the seeing what we love in danger, excites that interest on its behalf which we are scarcely conscious of, whilst we see it in security. The danger serves to bring out the affection, and to show us its depth; but it rather affords occasion of manifestation than increases the amount. And,

beyond question, if the child whose perverseness and profligacy have disquieted the father and the mother, causing them anxious days and sleepless nights, turn from the error of his ways, and seek their forgiveness and blessing ere they die, there will be excited such emotions in their hearts as have never been stirred by the rectitude and obedience of the rest of their offspring. We are sure, that if you could contemplate the family on that happy day, when the long-vacant chair was occupied by the prodigal, you would observe that the eye of the parent glistened most, when it rested on the son who had drawn forth its tears; ay, and that when at night, ere they went to their rest, they knelt down together, and the old man invoked God's blessing on his household, the faltering words would be, and the deep emphasis would be, and the rich thankfulness would be, when he spake of a sheep that had been lost and was found, rather than when mentioning those which never went astray. Yet you would never think that the wanderer was better loved than his brethren. You would never think that the evident emotions of the parent, and the gushings of his heart towards his repentant child, and the more apparent hold which had been gained on his affections through separation and anxiety, might be inducements with the children who had never transgressed, to imitate their brother in his rebellion and lawlessness. You would never come away from the survey of so beautiful a picture, the picture of a

family gladdened by the presence of a long-absent member, a member whose name has been, perhaps, almost banished, as a forbidden thing, from the circle—so dishonoured has it been, and so sullied,—the picture of a father and a mother, compensated for all their sorrows and prayers, by the return to their embrace and their household of the solitary alien who alone ever gave them pain, whilst brothers and sisters cluster round, and smile on the stranger, and breathe a deep welcome;—oh, we say, you would never come away from the survey of a picture, so rich in moral loveliness, with any lurking suspicion that repentance was preferable to unvaried obedience, or that the children might infer, from the unwonted joyousness of their parents, that their affections would be best gained by grieving them for a time, and then seeking their forgiveness.

And, in like manner, so far as we may carry up the illustration from the earthly to the heavenly, we deny, that, in representing God as rejoicing more over the recovered tribe than over those which never fell, we represent Him as better pleased with repentance than with uniform obedience. We do but ascribe to Him human emotions, just in order to show that there is a tenderness in Deity which makes Him solicitous, if the word be allowable, for those who have brought themselves into danger and difficulty, and which renders their deliverance an object of such mighty importance, that, when achieved, it may be said to minister more to his happiness than

the homage of the myriads who never moved his displeasure. And when, through the energies of redemption, the human race was reinstated in the place whence it fell, it was not that God prefers the penitent to those who never swerved from allegiance, and has greater delight in men who have sinned, than in angels who have always obeyed; it was not on these accounts that He was more gladdened, as we suppose Him, by the recovery of what had wandered, than by the stedfastness of what remained. It was only because, where there has been ground of anxiety, and a beloved object has been in peril, his restoration and safety open channels into which, for a while, the sympathies of the heart seem to pour all their fulness,—it was only on this account that, Divine things being illustrated by human, our Creator might be likened to a man, who, having found on the mountains the one sheep he had lost, “rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.”

But we have yet to take a more confined view of the parable in question. We judge from its context, as given by St. Matthew, that Christ designed to indicate the carefulness of God in reference to the erring members of the Church, which is specially his flock. He is there speaking of the little ones, who are his disciples and followers; and the truth which He declares illustrated by the parable is, that it is not the will of the Father that “one of these little ones should perish.” So, then, we may regard

the whole company of the faithful as the hundred sheep, and the one that wanders from the fold as that too frequent character which is spoken of in Scripture under the name of the backslider. God exercises a wonderful forbearance in respect of the backslider. The remonstrances of his Spirit, the warnings of his Providence, the exhortations of good men,—by all these does He urge upon him the necessity, if he would not be finally lost, of returning to the home he has left. And if the sheep, disappointed in its search after green spots in the wilderness, and torn with the briers of the world, hearken to the loving invitation, and suffer itself to be carried back to the fold, then it is not that God has greater affection towards the wanderer, than towards those who have been firm and consistent in religion: He does not prefer the backslider, when he has returned, to those who have always walked worthy of their vocation; and yet we may believe, that, since the backslider has been in danger, whilst other members of the flock have been in safety, the chief Shepherd will experience a delight in the restoration of the lonely outcast, which He does not gather from the abiding of the many who never leave his side; and that thus it will again come to pass, that He “rejoiceth more of the sheep that was lost, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.”

In like manner—and this is the case to which the parable seems applied by St. Luke—you may regard

the whole human family as the flock, those who believe in the good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep as that portion of the flock which has been brought into the fold, those who are still practically strangers to Christ as the wanderers who are yet upon the mountains. And the Shepherd, who bought the flock with his blood, longs and strives to gather in these wanderers. He has no anxiety in respect of those who have entered the fold. In them He hath seen of the travail of his soul, and been satisfied. He is assured of their safety; and therefore are his thoughts, as yours would be, if one dear friend were in imminent peril, with the exiles who are far away in the wilds. The righteous, those who are justified by faith in his merits, "need no repentance;" they have already been converted; and though they daily commit offences, for which they should daily be humbled in contrition, they cannot again require that thorough change of mind which is what Scripture emphatically designates repentance. It is not then for the righteous, but for those who have never turned to God, that his solitudes are engaged. And who shall marvel, if, when a sinner repents, and obtains share in the succours of redemption, that Almighty Being who hath loved him, and watched for him, and sought him, should draw greater gladness from this accession to his fold, than from the numbers who have been long within its precincts? oh, who shall think it any proof of indifference to stedfast allegiance, and of a preference of repentance

to uniform obedience, if he rejoice more of the sheep that was lost, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray?

And now, may we not say, that if the highest of created beings, nay, if the Creator Himself, may be set before us as eagerly intent on succouring the destitute, and upholding the weak, it must certainly be required of us, that we imitate, at whatever distance, the patterns thus presented, and seek assiduously that we be instruments in God's hands for bringing into his fold the sheep yet upon the mountains? It is thus that our subject applies itself, forcibly, and at once, to the charitable cause which we have to ask you to support. Unquestionably, if any class of persons may specially be described as little ones, left to wander, as sheep without a shepherd, on the bleak mountains of the earth, we may apply the expressions to young orphans, deprived of their natural guardians, and thrown on the compassions of strangers. And if, therefore, there be a case to which the touching lessons of the parable are peculiarly applicable, it is that of the children who now appeal to your bounty. We need not describe to you the deserted state of orphans, often left with no spot upon earth, but the grave of their parents, with which they can feel any natural association. We need not strive to paint to you the desolate condition of a family, from which sickness or accident has suddenly removed the head; the dreariness of the widow, as she rises from the corpse of her husband,

looks through her tears on her boys and her girls, and thinks that he who loved them, and laboured for them, and brought them their bread, has embraced them for the last time, and left them in utter destitution. The most affecting of all spectacles, in a world which presents every variety of wretchedness, is that of a household from which death has removed the only barrier against poverty, the family group weeping over the coffin which contains the single friend to whom they could look up for support. Oh! the very youngest, yet too young to know their loss, mingle their tears with the elders, as though our nature instinctively recoiled from the fearful loneliness of the orphan. Certainly you will not deny that here are the little ones, left upon the mountains, without a shelter, without a shepherd. And if it ever be a duty to seek the wandering, to direct them into safe paths, to provide that they be brought, if possible, within the fold of our heavenly Father, you must feel that it is in regard of these sheep; so that to be neglectful of the orphan, is to put from us the lessons which the parable before us so impressively inculcates.

And we thank God that we can affirm of our metropolis, that amongst its noble institutions which propose the relief of the varieties of human wretchedness, it numbers asylums for the orphan. The benevolent, whilst crowning this city with its most glorious diadem, the diadem not of castle and palace, but of refuges which are as castles, and of hospitals

which are as palaces, have not failed to make that diadem complete in its beauty, by rearing structures which may give shelter to the fatherless. Of late years several institutions have arisen for orphans; but none more worthy of the succour of Englishmen than that of which I now stand as advocate. The name pleads the cause—"the Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum." The orphans of seamen! Shame upon the Briton who cares not for the sailor: our country sits a queen upon the waves, and it is mainly to our seamen that, under God, she owes her greatness and her majesty. The orphans of merchant seamen—those seamen who carry on the commerce, rather than fight the battles, of England, who do not, therefore, establish any claim, whether for themselves or their children, on the national institutions, but whose services are not less arduous, not less dangerous, not less important, than if they were engaged in pouring the thunders of war on the foes who would dispute with us the empire of the seas. It is for the orphans of merchant seamen that we now ask your bounty—the orphans of the men who bear our manufactures to every land, and bring into our ports the productions of every soil; who carry out the Bibles and the missionaries through which we look for a shaking of the whole system of heathenism; who, if not actually engaged in fighting our battles, compose the body from which, if the demons of war were again let loose, must be draughted the thousands who would man those mighty vessels which now

sleep idly on their shadows, and guide them to the triumphs of another Nile and another Trafalgar. Ay, it is for the orphans of men such as these that the Asylum whose cause I now plead throws open its doors. And as I stand here, and can almost look on that finest spectacle which our metropolis presents, the forest of masts which rises, far as the eye can reach, from its noble river, I cannot but feel how many wives of merchant seamen there must be who turn pale when they hear the fury of the storm, and remember how the fathers of their children are far away on the surges of the deep; how often must come tidings of shipwreck which tell the wife that she is a widow, that the one whom she best loved has gone down with the waves for his winding-sheet, and that her children must be henceforward destitute! Oh, not so; English benevolence, your benevolence, will forbid this; and the distracted mother shall be comforted, and shall know that you have helped to provide a home for her orphans.

I preach to you on a day which will be held in remembrance for centuries to come, yea, whilst England is a nation, and there is one of her children still left upon the globe. Remember ye not that on this day was fought the most important of battles, on this day was won the noblest of the victories which have shed an imperishable glory over the land of our birth? On this day it was that a British general and a British army worsted the power of France, and achieved, on the plain of Waterloo, peace for

distracted Europe. How can the anniversary of the day occur, and not wake in English hearts glorious recollections, and emotions of rich thankfulness to that Being “unto whom belong the shields of the earth?” The thunder of the war comes rolling upon fancy’s ear; the rushing, mingling squadrons pass before fancy’s eye; and the God of battles compels the proud conqueror in a hundred campaigns to crouch and flee before our own immortal chieftain.

But what has the victory of Waterloo to do with the cause for which I now plead? Every thing. This victory opened to England the commerce of the world. This victory caused that every sea should be dotted with our ships. This victory multiplied a thousandfold our merchant seamen. This victory multiplied, I cannot tell you in what proportion, the orphans of merchant seamen. Then I may call upon you, by the shades of those who fell at Waterloo, by the memory of the brave fellows who, as on this day, set themselves as a rampart against your foes, and secured by their valour and their blood your cities and your valleys from hostile aggression, to give liberally to the institution which now appeals for support. I am bold to say that the hurricane and the battle, the ocean with its crested billows, and war with its magnificently stern retinue, meet and mingle to give force to our appeal. It is an appeal from stranded navies; but it is echoed also from the mounds of slaughtered battalions who, on the recurrence of this day, seem to wheel about us

in pale procession, to admonish us of our debt of gratitude, and to entreat us not to desert those who are widowed and orphaned through their victory.

What need we add more? We will plead for the Asylum which now solicits support, on the principle that God has revealed Himself under the character of a Father of the fatherless, and that the visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction is a main part of the scriptural definition of undefiled religion. Oh, what was this world but an orphaned world? what was our race but a race deprived of its natural guardian, when God sent his own Son to seek and to save that which was lost? Had there been no mercy for orphans, no compassion for the shipwrecked, then must we all have remained for ever on the mountains of tribulation. But there was mercy for orphans; there was compassion for the shipwrecked: the Almighty, by a marvellous exertion of loving-kindness, threw open an asylum large enough for the whole human race, and made provision that every child of calamity and sin might flee, if he would, to its magnificent shelter. And now, so much having been done for ourselves, shall we not be diligent in our endeavours to prove that we are not unmindful of the example left us by our Redeemer? Oh, we cannot, as He did, touch the bier, and give back the child to the embrace of the widowed mother; but we can comfort the widow's heart by snatching her child from a darker estate than the grave; we can provide an asylum for that

child, within whose walls it may be trained for admission to those mansions which Christ hath reared for the righteous—yea, we may be instrumental in fetching home at least one little lamb which must otherwise wander in the desert; and it should animate us to know that God will rejoice more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

SERMON XI.¹

THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL.

HEBREWS vi. 19.

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”

It is a very peculiar and interesting cause which I have this day undertaken to plead—that of the Floating Church, which offers the means of grace to our river population, to the most useful and well-nigh the most neglected of our countrymen—those who are carrying on our commerce, who have fought our battles, and who are ready, if peace be disturbed, to fight them again with equal valour, and, through God’s help, with equal success. If there be a call to which the hearts of Englishmen more naturally respond than to any other, it must be that which demands succour for sailors. As a nation we seem

¹ Preached at Trinity Church, Chelsea, on behalf of the Episcopal Floating Church.

to have less fellowship with the land than with the sea; and our strongest sympathies are with those who plough its surface, and dare its perils. I feel, therefore, that I never had a charity sermon to preach, whose subject gave me so powerful a hold on the feelings of a congregation; and I think that this hold will not be lessened, if I engage your attention with a passage of Scripture, in which the imagery, if I may use the expression, is peculiarly maritime, whilst the truths which are inculcated are of the most interesting kind. The Apostle Paul had just been speaking of "laying hold on the hope set before us," by which he seems to denote the appropriation of those various blessings which have all been procured for us by Christ. The hope is that of eternal life; and to lay hold on this hope, must be so to believe upon Christ, that we have share in those sufferings and merits which purchased forgiveness and immortality for the lost. And when the Apostle proceeds, in the words of our text, to describe this hope as an anchor of the soul, we are to understand him as declaring that the expectation of God's favour, and of the glories of heaven, through the atonement and intercession of Christ, is exactly calculated to keep us stedfast and unmoved amid all the tempests of our earthly estate. We shall assume, then, as we are fully warranted by the context in doing, that the hope in question is the hope of salvation, through the finished work of the Mediator. And it will be our chief business to engage you with

the metaphorical description which the Apostle gives of this hope, and thus aptly to introduce the peculiar claims of the Floating Church. St. Paul likens this hope to an anchor; and then declares of this anchor, or the hope, that it "entereth into that within the veil." Let these be our topics of discourse :

The first, that the Christian's hope is as an anchor to his soul.

The second, that this hope, or this anchor, "entereth into that within the veil."

I. Now the idea which is immediately suggested by this metaphor of the anchor, is that of our being exposed to great moral peril, tossed on rough waters, and in danger of making shipwreck of our faith. And we must be well aware, if at all acquainted with ourselves and our circumstances, that such idea is in every respect accurate; and that the imagery of a tempest-tossed ship, girt about by the rock and the quicksand, as well as beaten by the hurricane, gives no exaggerated picture of the believer in Christ, as opposition, under various forms, labours at his ruin. We are not, indeed, concerned at present with delineating the progress, but only the stedfastness of the Christian; but here, also, the ocean, with its waves and its navies, furnishes the aptest of figures. If there be any principle, or any set of principles, which keeps the Christian firm and immoveable amid the trials and tempests which, like billows and winds, beat on him furiously, it is

evident that we may fairly liken that principle, or that set of principles, to the anchor, which holds the ship fast, whilst the elements are raging, and enables her to ride out in safety the storm. And all, therefore, that is necessary, in order to the vindicating the metaphor of our text is, the showing that the hope of which St. Paul speaks is just calculated for the giving the Christian this fixedness, and thus preventing his being driven on the rock, or drawn into the whirlpool.

There are several, and all simple modes, in which it may be shown that such is the property of this hope. We first observe, that there is great risk of our being carried about, as an Apostle expresses it, "with every wind of doctrine;" and whatever, therefore, tends to the keeping us in the right faith, in spite of gusts of error, must deserve to be characterized "as an anchor of the soul." But we may unhesitatingly declare, that there is a power, the very strongest, in the hope of salvation through Christ, of enabling us to stand firm against the incursions of heresy. The man who has this hope will have no ear for doctrines which, in the least degree, depreciate the person or work of the Mediator. You take away from him all that he holds most precious, if you could once shake his belief in the Atonement. It is not that he is afraid of examining the grounds of his own confidence; it is, that, having well examined them, and certified himself as to their being irreversible, his confidence has become wound

up, as it were, with his being; and it is like assaulting his existence, to assault his hope. The hope presupposes faith in the Saviour; and faith has reasons for the persuasion that Jesus is God's Son, and "able to save to the uttermost:" and though the individual is ready enough to probe these reasons, and to bring them to any fitting criterion, it is evident, that where faith has once taken possession, and generated hope, he has so direct and overwhelming an interest in holding fast truth, that it must be more than a specious objection, or a well-turned cavil, which will prevail to the loosening his grasp.

And therefore do we affirm of the hope of salvation, that he who has it, is little likely to be carried about with every wind of doctrine. We scarcely dare think that those who are Christians only in profession and theory, would retain truth without wavering, if exposed to the machinations of insidious reasoners. They do not feel their everlasting portion so dependent on the doctrine of redemption through the blood and righteousness of a Surety, that, to shake this doctrine, is to make them castaways for eternity; and therefore neither can they oppose that resistance to assault which will be offered by others who know that it is their immortality they are called to surrender. You may look, then, on an individual, who, apparently unprepared for a vigorous defence of his creed, is yet not to be overborne by the strongest onset of heresy. And you may think

to account for his firmness by resolving it into a kind of obstinacy, which makes him inaccessible to argument; and thus take from his constancy all moral excellence, by representing it as imperviousness to all moral attack. But we have a better explanation to propose; one which does not proceed on the unwarranted assumption, that there must be insensibility where there has not been defeat. We know of the individual, that he has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the Gospel. And you may say of hope, that it is a shadowy and airy thing, not adapted to the keeping man firm; but we assert, on the contrary, of the hope of salvation, that he who has grasped it, feels that he has grasped what is substantial and indestructible; and that henceforward, to wrench away this hope would be like wrenching away the rafter from a drowning man, who knows that, if you loosen his hold, he must perish in the waters. Ay, the hope is too precious to be tamely surrendered. It has animated him too much, and cheered him too much, and sustained him too much, to be given up otherwise than inch by inch—every fraction of the truths on which it rests being disputed for with that vehemence of purpose which proves the consciousness that with defeat can come nothing but despair. And therefore is it that so little way is made by the teacher of infidelity and error. He is striving to prevail on the individual he attacks, to throw away, as worthless, a treasure which he would not change

for whatsoever earth can proffer of the rich and the glorious; and where is the marvel, if he find himself resisted with the determination of one who wrestles for his all? You may liken, then, the believer in Christ to a vessel launched on troubled waters; and you may consider scepticism and false doctrine as the storms which threaten him with shipwreck. And when you express surprise that a bark, which seems so frail, and so poorly equipped against the tempest, should ride out the hurricane, whilst others, a thousand times better furnished with all the resources of intellectual seamanship, drive from their moorings, and perish on the quicksand, we have only to tell you, that it is not by the strength of reason, and not through the might of mental energy, that moral shipwreck is avoided; but that a hope of salvation will keep the vessel firm when all the cables which man weaves for himself have given way like tow; and that thus, in the wildest of the storms which evil men and evil angels can raise, this hope will verify the Apostle's description, that it is an anchor of the soul, and that, too, sure and steadfast.

But there are other respects in which it may be equally shown, that there is a direct tendency in Christian hope to the promoting Christian steadfastness. We observe, next, that a believer in Christ is in as much danger of being moved by the trials with which he meets, as by attacks upon his faith. But he has a growing consciousness that "all things

work together for good," and therefore an increasing submissiveness in the season of tribulation, or an ever-strengthening adherence to God as to a father. And that which contributes, perhaps more than aught besides, to the producing this adherence, is the hope on which the Christian lays hold. If you study the language of David when in trouble, you will find that it was hope by which he was sustained. He describes himself in terms which accurately correspond to the imagery of our text. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." But when the tempest was thus at its height, and every thing seemed to conspire to overwhelm and destroy him, he could yet say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." It is hope, you observe, to which he turns, as the principle through which the soul might best brave the hurricane. And can we wonder that a hope, such as that of the believer in Christ, should so contribute to the steadfastness of its possessor, that the winds may buffet him, and the floods beat against him, and yet he remains firm, like the well-anchored vessel? He knew that, in throwing in his lot with the followers of Jesus, he was consenting to a life of stern moral discipline, and that he must be prepared for a more than ordinary share of those chastisements from which nature recoils. And why,

forewarned as he thus was of what should be met with in a Christian course, did he adventure on the profession of a religion which was to multiply his troubles? Why embarked he on an ocean, swept by fiercer winds, and arched with darker skies, when he might have shaped his voyage over less agitated waters? We need not tell you, that he has heard of a bright land, which is only to be reached by launching forth on this boisterous sea. We need not tell you, that he has assured himself, upon evidence which admits no dispute, that there is no safety for a vessel freighted with immortality, unless she be tempest-tossed; and that, though there may be a smoother expanse, dotted with islands which seem clad with a richer verdure, and sparkling with a sunshine which is more cheering to the senses of the mariner, yet that it is on the lake, thus sleeping in its beauty, that the ship is in most peril; and that if the lake be changed for the wild broad ocean, then only will a home be reached where no storm rages, and no clouds darken, but where, in one unbroken tranquillity, those who have braved the moral tempest will repose eternally in the light of God's countenance.

It was hope, then, by which the Christian was animated, when taking his resolve to breast the fury of every adversary, and embrace a religion which told him, that in the world he should have tribulation. And when the tribulation comes, and the crested waves are swelling higher and higher, why

should you expect him to be driven back, of swallowed up? Is it the loss of property with which he is visited, and which threatens to shake his dependence upon God? Hope whispers that he has in heaven an enduring substance; and he takes joyfully the spoiling of his goods. Is it the loss of friends? He sorrows not "even as others which have no hope," but is comforted by the knowledge, that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Is it sickness—is it the treachery of friends—is it the failure of cherished plans, which hangs the firmament with blackness, and works the waters into fury? None of these things move him; for hope assures him that his "light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Is it death, which, advancing in its awfulness, would beat down his confidence, and snap his cordage, and send him adrift? His hope is a hope full of immortality: he knows "in whom he hath believed, and is persuaded that he is able to keep that which he hath committed unto him against that day." And thus, from whatever point the tempest rages, there is a power in that hope which God hath implanted, of holding fast the Christian, and preventing his casting away that "confidence which hath great recompense of reward." We can bid you look upon him, when, on every human calculation, so fierce is the hurricane, and so wrought are the waves into madness, there would seem no likelihood of his avoiding the

making shipwreck of his faith. And when you find, that, in place of being stranded or engulfed, he resists the wild onset, and, if he do not for the moment advance, keeps the way he has made, oh! then we have an easy answer to give to inquiries as to the causes of this unexpected steadfastness. We do not deny the strength of the storm, and the might of the waters; but we tell you of a hope which grows stronger and stronger as tribulation increases; stronger, because sorrow is the known discipline for the enjoyment of the object of this hope; stronger, because the proved worthlessness of what is earthly serves to fix the affections more firmly on what is heavenly; stronger, inasmuch as there are promises of God, which seem composed on purpose for the season of trouble, and which, then grasped by faith, throw new vigour into hope. And certainly, if we may affirm all this of the hope of a Christian, there is no room for wonder that he rides out the hurricane; for such hope is manifestly an anchor of the soul, and that, too, sure and steadfast.

We go on to observe, that the Christian is exposed to great varieties of temptation: the passions of an evil nature, and the enticements of a "world which lieth in wickedness," conspire to draw him aside from righteousness, and force him back to the habits and scenes which he has professedly abandoned. The danger of spiritual shipwreck would be comparatively small, if the sea on which he voyages were swept by no storms but those of

sorrow and persecution. The risk is far greater, when he is assaulted by the solicitations of his own lusts, and the corrupt affections of his nature are plied with their correspondent objects. And though it too often happens that he is overcome by temptation, we are sure, that, if he kept hope in exercise, he would not be moved by the pleadings of the flesh and the world. Let hope be in vigour, and the Christian's mind is fixed on a portion which he can neither measure by his imagination, nor be deprived of by his enemies. He is already in a city which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon; whose walls are of jasper, and whose streets of gold. Already he joins the general assembly and church of the first-born, already is he the equal of angels, already is he advancing with a shining company which no man can number, towards the throne of God and of the Lamb, and beholding face to face the Creator and Redeemer, and bursting into an ecstasy of adoration, as the magnificence of Deity is more and more developed. And now, if, at a time such as this, when it may almost be said that he has entered the haven, that he breathes the fragrance, and gazes on the loveliness, and shares the delights of the Paradise of God, he be solicited to the indulgence of a lust, the sacrifice of a principle, or the pursuit of a bauble, can you think the likelihood to be great that he will be mastered by the temptation, that he will return, at the summons of some low passion, from his splendid excursion, and defile him-

self with the impurities of earth? Oh! we can be confident, and the truth is so evident as not to need proof, that, in proportion as a man is anticipating the pleasures of eternity, he will be firm in his resolve of abstaining from the pleasures of sin. We can be confident, that if hope, the hope set before us in the Gospel, be earnestly clung to, there will be no room in the grasp for the glittering toys with which Satan would bribe us to throw away our eternity. And therefore, to bring the matter again under the figure of our text, we can declare of hope, that it ministers to Christian stedfastness, when the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, combine to produce wavering and inconstancy. Again we liken the Christian to a ship, and the temptations by which he is met to a tempest, which threatens to drive him back, and cast him a wreck upon the shore. And it would avail nothing that he was furnished with the anchors, if such they may be called, of a philosophic love of virtue, of a feeling that vice is degrading to man, and of a general opinion that God may possibly approve self-denial. If these held the ship at first, they would quickly give way, when the storm of evil passion grew towards its height. But hope, the hope of a heaven into which shall enter nothing that defileth; the hope of joys as pure as they are lofty, and as spiritual as they are abiding; the hope of what the eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, but which can be neither attained nor enjoyed without holiness, this hope, we say, is a

Christian's sheet-anchor in the hurricane of temptation; and if he use this hope, in his endeavours to bear up against the elements, he shall, by God's help, weather the worst moral storm; and then, when the sky is again bright, and the mighty billows have subsided, and the vessel again spreads her canvass, oh! he shall gratefully and rejoicingly confess of this hope, that it is an anchor of the soul, and that, too, sure and stedfast.

II. Now, throughout these illustrations, we have rather assumed than proved that Christian hope is of a nature widely different from that of any other. But it will be easily seen that we have claimed for it nothing beyond the truth, if we examine, in the second place, the Apostle's statement in regard of a Christian's hope, that it "entereth into that within the veil." The allusion is undoubtedly to the veil or curtain which separated the holy place from the holy of holies in the temple at Jerusalem. By the holy of holies was typified the scene of God's immediate presence, into which Christ entered when the days of his humiliation were ended. And hence we understand by the hope, or the anchor, entering within the veil, that, in believing upon Jesus, we fasten ourselves, as it were, to the realities of the invisible world. This throws new and great light on the simile of our text. It appears that the Christian, whilst tossing on a tempestuous sea, is fast bound to another scene of being, and that, whilst the vessel is on the waters of time, the anchor is on

the rock of eternity. And it is not possible that the soul should find safe anchorage without the veil. Conscious as she is, and often forced to allow scope to the consciousness, that she is not to perish with the body, she may strive, indeed, to attach herself firmly to terrestrial things; but an evergrowing restlessness will prove that she has cast her anchor where it cannot gain a hold. If we were merely intellectual beings, and not also immortal, the case might be different. There might be an anchor of the mind, which entered not into that within the veil, of strength enough, and tenacity enough, to produce stedfastness amid the fluctuations of life. But immortal as we are, as well as intellectual, the anchor of the soul must be dropped in the waters of the boundless hereafter. And when, after vain efforts to preserve herself from wreck and disquietude, by fixing her hope on things which perish with the using, she is taught of God to make heaven and its glories the object of expectation, then it is as though she had let down her anchor to the very base of the everlasting hills, and a mighty hold is gained, and the worst tempest may be defied. The soul which is thus anchored in eternity, is like the vessel which a stanch cable binds to the distant shore, and which gradually warps itself into harbour. There is at once what will keep her stedfast in the storm, and advance her towards the haven. Who knows not that the dissatisfaction which men always experience whilst engaged in the pursuit of earthly

good, arises mainly from a vast disproportion between their capacities for happiness, and that material of happiness with which they think to fill them? What they hope for is some good, respecting which they might be certain, that, if attained, it will only disappoint. And therefore is it, that, in place of being as an anchor, hope itself agitates them, driving them hither and thither, like ships without ballast.

But it is not thus with a hope which entereth within the veil. Within the veil are laid up joys and possessions which are more than commensurate with men's capacities for happiness, when stretched to the utmost. Within the veil is a glory, such as was never proposed by ambition in its most daring flight; and a wealth, such as never passed before avarice in its most golden dreams; and delights, such as imagination, when employed in delineating the most exquisite pleasures, hath never been able to array. And let hope fasten on this glory, this wealth, these delights, and presently the soul, as though she felt that the objects of desire were as ample as herself, acquires a fixedness of purpose, a steadiness of aim, a combination of energies, which contrast strangely with the inconstancy, the vacillation, the distraction, which have made her hitherto the sport of every wind and every wave. The object of hope being immeasurable, inexhaustible, hope clings to this object with a tenacity which it cannot manifest when grasping only the insignificant

and unsubstantial; and thus the soul is bound, we might almost say indissolubly, to the unchangeable realities of the inheritance of the saints. And can you marvel, if, with her anchor thus dropped within the veil, she is not to be driven from her course by the wildest of the storms which yet rage without? Besides, within the veil is an Intercessor, whose pleadings insure that these objects of hope shall be finally attained. There is something exquisitely beautiful in the idea, that the anchor has not been dropped in the rough waters which the Christian has to navigate. The anchor rests where there is one eternal calm, and its hold is on a rock which no action of the waves can wear down. You may say of Christian hope, that it is a principle which gives fixedness to the soul, because it can appeal to an ever-living, ever-prevalent Intercessor, who is pledged to make good its amplest expectations. It is the hope of joys which have been purchased at a cost which it is not possible to compute, and which are delivered into a guardianship which it is not possible to defeat. It is the hope of an inheritance, our title to which has been written in the blood of the Mediator, and our entrance into which that Mediator ever lives to secure. And therefore is it that we affirm of Christian hope, that it is precisely adapted to the preventing the soul from being borne away by the gusts of temptation, or swallowed up in the deep waters of trial. It is more than hope. It is hope with all its attractiveness, and with none of its

uncertainty. It is hope, with all that beauty and brilliancy by which men are fascinated, and with none of that delusiveness by which they are deceived. It is hope, with its bland and soothing voice, but that voice whispering nothing but truth; hope, with its untired wing, but that wing lifting only to regions which have actual existence; hope, with its fairy pencil, but that pencil painting only what really flashes with the gold and vermilion. Oh! if hope be fixed upon Christ, that Rock of ages,—a Rock rent, if we may use the expression, on purpose that there might be a holding-place for the anchors of a perishing world,—it may well come to pass that hope gives the soul stedfastness. I know that within the veil there ever reigneth one who obtained right, by his agony and passion, to rear eternal mansions for those who believe upon his name. I know that within the veil there are not only pleasures and possessions adequate to the capacities of my nature, when advanced to full manhood, but a Friend, a Surety, an Advocate, who cannot be prevailed with, even by my unworthiness, to refuse me a share in what He died to procure, and lives to bestow. And therefore, if I fix my hope within the veil,—within the veil, where are the alone delights that can satisfy; within the veil, where is Christ, whose intercession can never be in vain,—hope will be such as is neither to be diverted by passing attractions, nor daunted by apprehensions of failure; it will, consequently, keep me firm alike amid the storm of evil

passions, and the inrush of Satan's suggestions; it will enable me equally to withstand the currents which would hurry me into disobedience, and the eddies which would sink me into despondency. And, oh, then, is it not with justice that I declare of hope, that "it is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast;" and that I give as the reason, that "it entereth into that within the veil?"

And now we may safely ask, whether, if you know any thing practically of the worth of Christian hope, you can be indifferent to the condition of thousands around you who have no such anchor of the soul? If you are anchored within the veil, can you look on with unconcern, whilst many a noble bark, on the right hand and on the left, freighted with immortality, is drifting to and fro, the sport of every wind, and in danger each instant of being wrecked for eternity? We are sure that Christian privileges are of so generous and communicative a nature, that no man can possess and not wish to impart them. And if there be a class of individuals who, on all accounts, have a more than common claim on the sympathy of Christians, because more than commonly exposed to moral tempests and dangers, may we not select sailors as that class,—men whose business is in great waters, who from boyhood have been at home on the sea, whether in storm or in calm, but whose opportunities of Christian instruction are, for the most part, wretchedly small, and who learn to steer to every harbour except that which lieth within the veil?

The religious public have much to answer for on account of the neglect—of course we speak comparatively—which they have manifested towards sailors. Very little has even yet been done towards ameliorating their moral condition. So soon as the sailor returns to port, after having been long tossed on distant seas, he is surrounded by miscreants who seek to entice him to scenes of the worst profligacy, that they may possess themselves of his hard-earned gains. And Christian philanthropy has been very slow in stepping in and offering an asylum to the sailor, where he may be secure against the villany which would ruin body and soul. Christian philanthropy has been very slow in taking measures for providing, that when he returned from his wanderings—probably to find many in the grave who had sent anxious thoughts after him as he ploughed the great deep, and who had vainly hoped to welcome him back—he should have the Gospel preached to him, and the ministers of Christianity to counsel, and admonish, and encourage him. It is vain to say that our churches have been open, and that the sailor as well as the landsman might enter, and hear the glad tidings of redemption. You are to remember, that for months, and perhaps even years, the sailor has been debarred from means of grace; he has been in strange climes, where he has seen nothing but idolatry; even the forms of religion have been altogether kept from him; and now he requires to be sought out and entreated, and unless in some peculiar

mode you bring the Gospel to him, the likelihood is the very smallest of his seeking it for himself. But we thank God that of late years attempts have been made, so far as the port of this great city is concerned, to provide Christian instruction for sailors. There is now a floating church in our river: a vessel which had been built for the battle, and which walked the waters to pour its thunder on the enemies of our land, has, through the kindness of government, been converted into a place of worship; and a flag waves from it, telling the mariner that on the element which he has made his own he may learn how to cast anchor for eternity; and the minister of this church moves about among the swarming ships as he would move through his parish, endeavouring by the use of all the engines with which God has entrusted his ambassadors, to arrest vice and gain a hold for religion amongst the wild and weather-beaten crews. And it is in support of this church that we now ask your contributions. His Majesty the king, by the liberal annual subscription of 50*l.*, shows how warm an interest he takes in the cause, and recommends it to the succour of his subjects. The exemplary bishop, moreover, of this diocese—whom may a gracious God soon restore to full health—is deeply interested on behalf of this church. But you cannot need to be told of the great and the noble who support this cause; it asks not the recommendation of titled patronage; you are Englishmen, and the church is for sailors. Yes, the church

is for sailors, men who have bled for us, men who fetch for us all the productions of the earth, men who carry out to every land the Bibles we translate and the missionaries we equip. The church is for sailors; and yet, though the annual expenditure is only between 300*l.* and 400*l.*, the stated annual income—I am almost ashamed to say it—is only 150*l.*

I am persuaded that to mention this will suffice to procure a very liberal collection. I cannot bring myself to attempt the working on your feelings. When I plead the cause of sailors, it seems to me as though the hurricane and the battle, the ocean with its crested billows, and war with its magnificently stern retinue, met and mingled to give force to the appeal. It seems as though stranded navies, the thousands who have gone down with the waves for their winding-sheet, and who await in unfathomable caverns the shrill trumpet-peal of the archangel, rose to admonish us of the vast debt we owe those brave fellows who are continually jeopardizing their lives in our service. And then there comes also before me, the imagery of a mother who has parted, with many tears and many forebodings, from her sailor-boy; whose thoughts have accompanied him as none but those of a mother can in his long wanderings over the deep, and who would rejoice with all a mother's gladness, to know that where his moral danger was perhaps the greatest, there was a church to receive him and a minister to counsel him.

But we shall not enlarge on such topics. We only throw out hints, believing that this is enough to waken thoughts in your minds which will not allow of your contenting yourselves with such contributions as are the ordinary produce of charity sermons. The great glory of England, and her great defence, have long lain, under the blessing of God, in what we emphatically call her wooden walls. And if we could make vital Christianity general amongst our sailors, we should have done more than can be calculated towards giving permanence to our national greatness, and bringing onward the destruction of heathenism. We say advisedly, the destruction of heathenism. The influence is not to be computed which English sailors now exert for evil all over the globe. They are scattered all over the globe; but too often, though far from always, unhappily, their dissoluteness brings discredit on the Christian religion, and pagans learn to ridicule the faith which seems prolific of nothing but vice. Our grand labour, therefore, should be to teach our sailors to cast anchor within the veil; and then in all their voyages would they serve as missionaries, and not a ship would leave our coasts which was not freighted with preachers of redemption; and wheresoever the British flag flies, and that is wheresoever the sea beats, would the standard of the cross be displayed. Ay, man our wooden walls with men who have taken Christian hope as the anchor of the soul, and these walls shall be as ramparts which no enemies can

overthrow, and as batteries for the demolition of the strongholds of Satan. Then,—and may God hasten the time, and may you now prove your desire for its coming—then will the navy of England be every where irresistible, because every where voyaging in the strength and service of the Lord; and the noble words of poetry shall be true in a higher sense than could ever yet be affirmed :

“ Britannia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep ;
Her march is on the mountain-wave,
Her home is on the deep.”

SERMON XII.¹

BROKEN CISTERNS.

JEREMIAH ii. 13.

“For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

IT would ill become me as a minister of the Established and Protestant Church of this kingdom to address you on the present anniversary, without referring to those two great events which have been commemorated in the services of the day. Though not a friend to the keeping up observances which might only be calculated to the keeping up irritated feelings, far less would I be a friend to the ceasing to give thanks for a great national deliverance, or to acknowledge a great religious benefit. And far less

¹ Preached at Camden Chapel, on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot.

would I be silent when silence might be construed into an admission of there being no important difference between Protestantism and Popery, of its being time that we freed ourselves from the bigotry of our forefathers, and looked with less dislike, or less fear, on the Roman Catholic religion. The two events which are this day commemorated stand closely associated, as you must all be aware, with the Protestantism of England. On this day was to have been carried into execution that most diabolical scheme, ever since known as the Gunpowder Plot, which was to have destroyed at one moment the king, lords, and commons of this realm, and thus have made a clear scene for papal intrigue and papal domination. On this same day, but after an interval of seventy-three years, did William prince of Orange, the son-in-law of James II., land in our country, summoned by the people, who saw that their king was bent on re-establishing Popery, and who felt that in so doing he would rob them of all that was most precious.

It is evident that in thankfully acknowledging these events, we acknowledge it as an incalculable blessing that Protestantism has been upheld in this kingdom, and Popery not been suffered to regain the ascendancy. The observance of the day is a national recognition of the great principles of the Reformation, and as such offers an important opportunity to the Protestant clergy of reminding their hearers what those principles were, and of entreating

them to take heed that they desert them not, as though Popery were changed, and no longer to be dreaded. We would not fail to embrace this opportunity. We shall say nothing at present as to whether there be aught in the aspect of the times to make it specially important that every due occasion be taken of impressing upon Protestants their peculiar duties and privileges. But at least, if the Reformation were worth achieving, and if it be worth maintaining, the present institution deserves to be solemnly kept; and we shall accordingly proceed, without further preface, to the addressing you on topics which we have described as appropriate to such an anniversary. Our text will, we think, furnish us with the fitting material. They are the words of God Himself, upbraiding the Jews with deserting his worship and embracing idolatry. And so appalling did such an act of national apostasy appear in the eyes of the Almighty Himself, that He introduces its mention by a solemn appeal to the heavens—whether the firmament, with its many worlds which, inanimate though they were, might almost be considered as roused into listening when a thing so atrocious had to be told; or angels, those radiant intelligences, who, with all their gloriousness, were intent on promoting the happiness of men. “Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord.”

It must indeed be something extraordinary in

wickedness which is introduced by such an address to the heavens. Yet it is that whereof we ourselves are in much danger of being guilty. It is that, we are bold at once to say, whereof we should be guilty if, having been delivered from the yoke and trammels of Popery, we should suffer ourselves to be again entangled and brought into bondage. For if it were a less open, it would not, we are persuaded, be a less actual abandonment of the fountain of living waters for "broken cisterns which can hold no water," were a people, privileged with the reformed religion, to lapse into Romanism, than it was when Israel of old forsook the institutions of Moses, and did homage at the altars of Baal and Ashtaroth. And this at once opens before you the special point of view under which we would have our text considered on the present occasion. It will become us indeed, in the first place, to treat it more generally, lest you fall into the error of supposing that it is only by turning Papists that you can imitate the conduct so sternly denounced in the Israelites. Afterwards we shall endeavour to engage your attention with such contrasts between the Reformed Church and the Roman as might justify our accommodating the text to Protestants who should become Papists. Thus, then, our topics of discourse are sufficiently defined. In the first place, we are to examine how the two evils here denounced may be committed generally by all men; in the second place, how they may be committed particularly by Protestants: we are to examine,

that is, how, in the first place, as the creatures of God, and how, in the second, as members of a Reformed Church, we are in danger of so acting that the heavens may be called upon to be astonished, yea, horribly afraid and very desolate, seeing that we shall have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to ourselves "cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Now whilst there are two evils distinctly specified in the text, we are not to suppose that they are ever committed separately, the one without the other: no man forsakes the living fountain who does not also hew out the broken cistern—for there is a search after happiness in which all men naturally, and even necessarily, engage; and if they do not seek happiness in God, where alone it may be found, they will inevitably seek it in the creature, though only to be cheated and disappointed. And God gives a most emphatic and comprehensive description of Himself, when He calls Himself "the fountain of living waters"—"the fountain," in that He has all being, all grace in Himself, in that He is the source of all existence, the spring of all enjoyment: the fountain of "living waters," inasmuch as there are no waters but in and from Him to slake the thirst of the soul, the immortal principle, whose cravings are not to be appeased but by that which hath "life in itself."

But if a "fountain of living waters" most accurately describe the Creator, then may all created

good, as distinguished from, or set in opposition to, the Creator, be with equal accuracy described as "cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water:" in the first place, as "cisterns," because of small capacity, and containing nothing but what is derived from another; in the second place, as "broken" cisterns, forasmuch as sin has marred the choicest vessels which the Almighty's hand wrought; in the third place, as cisterns "that will hold no water," seeing that they can afford no real, no constant, no satisfying comfort: there is in them but enough to mock the thirst; and he who thinks to take a full draught finds that the water has leaked through, and left his wants unsupplied. Yet notwithstanding that these several truths are attested by universal experience—for who ever sought happiness in the Creator, and did not find it? who ever sought happiness in the creature, and did not miss it?—there is continually going on the same forsaking of the fountain, the same hewing out of the cistern, which are so pathetically and indignantly denounced in the text. "Man still walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain:" in spite of a thousand demonstrations that he has been made for God, and that in God alone can he find what shall be adequate to his capacity, how will he pursue what must escape him, and toil for what must deceive! There is something very striking in the expression "hewed them out cisterns." What labour does it indicate, what effort, what endurance! You seem to behold

men in the very quarry, grappling with the huge rocks, and applying all their skill and their sinew to the fashioning reservoirs which, so fast as they are formed, are found to have flaws, so that the labour is thrown away, and the task has again to be begun. "Hewed them out cisterns." Had the cisterns been ready made to their hands, there had not been so much with which to upbraid them, or for which to reprove. But God has caused that it shall be actually a toilsome thing for men to seek happiness in the creature. Witness the diggings, so to speak, of avarice: witness the painful climbings of ambition: witness the disgusts and disappointments of sensuality. You have to "hew out" the cisterns—and even this were little: the material is fragile as well as hard; and what you shape you also shatter.

Were not this so well known, we might almost say self-evident, there might comparatively be some excuse for the continued endeavour to obtain from created things the material of happiness. But observe how God makes it an aggravation of the sin of his being forsaken, that He is forsaken for that which must demand toil, and then yield disappointment. He sets the "fountain of living waters" in contrast with "broken cisterns"—as though He would point out the vast indignity offered Him, in that what was preferred was so unworthy and insufficient. It is the language not only of jealousy—of jealousy in that refined yet terrible sense in which

Holy Scripture applies it unto God—but of jealousy stung to the very quick by the baseness of the object to which the plighted affection has been unblushingly transferred. Had it been fountain against fountain, had there been any place for comparison, so that men might have wavered as to where the living waters were, there had been less to move a jealous God. But the cistern, the cistern that has to be hewn out, the broken cistern, the cistern that can hold no water—to be forsaken for this—“Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth.” Ah, my brethren, this is the last thing which gives such an emphasis to the passage. God speaks *of* his people as offering Him this indignity; but He does not speak *to* his people. No, He addresses Himself rather to the inanimate, the irrational. He tells his grievance to the material creation, as though even that were more likely to feel and resent it than the beings who were actually guilty of the sin. And ye who are setting up idols for yourselves, ye who, in spite of every demonstration of the uselessness of the endeavour, are striving to be happy without God, we will not reason with you: it were like passing too slight censure on your sin, it were representing it as less blinding, less besotting, than it actually is, to suppose that you would attend to, or feel the force of, an ordinary remonstrance. But if ye have done, or if ye are doing, this thing—if there be those of you who worship the images which the madness of

practical atheism hath set up, leaving the Creator for the creature, making gold your trust, or distinction your aim, or pleasure your God, stand ye indeed apart : ye are scarcely to be regarded as exercising the faculties of rational beings ; some demon hath bewitched you, so monstrous is the cheat which you are putting on yourselves. Shall a fellow-man argue with you, as though he thought to convince you, when the thing which you practically deny is, that the soul is larger than any finite good ? the thing which you practically affirm, that the shadow is the substance, the phantom the reality ? Nay, we had better do as is done in our text. It may move you more, ye worshippers of visible things, to find yourselves treated as past being reasoned with, than flattered with addresses which suppose in you the full play of the understanding and the judgment. Ye will not hearken : “ Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle : ” but there are those who witness and wonder at your madness : the visible universe, as if amazed at finding itself searched for that which its own sublime and ceaseless proclamations declare to be nowhere but in God, assumes a listening posture ; and whilst the Almighty publishes your infatuation, your baseness, in that ye have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out broken cisterns, He hath secured Himself an audience, “ whether ye will hear, or whether ye will forbear ; ” for the accusation is not uttered till there

have been this astounding call: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord."

But let us proceed to the case which is perhaps still more distinctly contemplated by the passage before us—that of the abandonment of the true religion for a false. Undoubtedly the preference of the creature to the Creator as a source of happiness, which is what we have just been considering, is but too apt an illustration of the forsaking of the fountain of living waters, and the hewing out cisterns that can hold no water. But it is not precisely that with which the Jews were then chargeable; or rather, it is not that with which they were then more immediately charged: it is the changing the object of religious worship, the leaving the true God, the God of their fathers, for the idols of the heathen, which forms, as you may easily see from the context, the burden of the present accusation. And now you are all alive, as though this must have brought us to that point in our discourse, at which Protestantism is to be the fountain of living waters, and Popery the broken cistern. You are impatient to be there: men are marvellously fond of hearing their own system praised, and an opposite denounced. But we are not yet at this point of discourse. We have a few more general truths to settle and exhibit, before we attempt a contrast between the Reformed Church and the Roman. There are many ways wherein the thing complained of in the text may be

done, though men continue within the pale and profession of Protestantism.

If ever God discovered Himself as a "fountain of living waters," it was when, in the person of his own Divine Son, He opened on this earth a "fountain for sin and for uncleanness." Providing, in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, an expiation for human guilt, and in the gift of his Holy Spirit, which was one result of the Mediator's interference, a renewal of human nature, He fulfilled to the letter the prophetic promise, "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." This earth was indeed a wilderness; and every thing therein was dried up and parched, as though there had passed over it—as truly there had—the breath of its Maker's indignation: but there came to it one, human in form, but divine in person; and through what He performed, and what He endured, living streams gushed forth; and the thirsty might everywhere drink and be refreshed, the polluted everywhere wash and be clean. The justifying virtue of the work of the Redeemer, the sanctifying of that of the Spirit—these include every thing of which, as sinful but immortal beings, we can have need: by the former we may have title to the Kingdom of Heaven, and by the latter be made meet for the glorious inheritance. That God "hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righte-

ousness of God in him"—here truly is the sum and substance of the Gospel; and whosoever, conscious of his sinfulness, and intent on learning how he may be saved, hath had these words brought home to him "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," oh, he can testify that not to the traveller on the burning desert is the bubbling fountain more eloquent of life, than the Gospel, thus gathered into a sentence, to the wanderer who feels condemned by the law. Nevertheless, can it be said that men in general are ready to close with the Gospel, to partake of it as the parched traveller of the spring found amid the sands? Alas, "who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" The invitation is going forth, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" but it has to be accompanied with the ancient remonstrance, "why do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" Labour is thus thrown away: cisterns are "hewn out." Even where religion is not neglected, what pains are bestowed on the making some system less distasteful to pride, or more complacent to passion, than practical, unadulterated Christianity! What costly effort is given to the compounding the human with the Divine, our own merit with that of Christ; or to the preparing ourselves for the reception of grace, as though it were not grace *by* which, as well as grace *for* which, we are prepared, grace which must fashion the vessel, as well as grace which must fill it. Truly the

cistern is "hewn out," when the fountain is forsaken. Let Christ be unto you "all in all," "made unto you of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," and the fountain gives a river which, like the rock struck in Horeb, never ceaseth to make glad the believer. But turn away, though by a single step, from Christ, and, oh, the toil, the dissatisfaction, of endeavouring to make—what? "a broken cistern," "a cistern that can hold no water"—if creature comforts are such cisterns to those who seek happiness, creature systems must be to those who seek immortality.

For what shall endure the severity of God's scrutiny, but that which is itself of God's appointing and providing? Subject, so to speak, one of your cisterns to his inspection, whether repentance as supposed to be necessarily efficacious to forgiveness, or good works considered as meritorious, or his own mercy as too great to take vengeance—and how He will look it through! how full of flaws will it become! how utterly incapable of holding any thing but that wine of his wrath, of whose dregs you read in the Book of Psalms, dregs which, if we may use such expression, may prevent the wine's escape, filling up the fissures, but only that you may have always whereof you must drink, but never wherewith you may slake your thirst. But shall we wonder then that God denounces, in terms so reproachful and indignant, the leaving the fountain, and the hewing out the cistern? the substituting for the simple, un-

adulterated Gospel of Christ, any of those devices of reason, or creations of pride, to which some would have recourse for motive to duty, strength in trial, comfort in sorrow, hope in death? Shall we wonder, that as if, where such a thing could be done, it were idle to expect that its enormity should be felt, He appeals, not to earth, but to heaven, for an audience? appeals, and in what terms? "Be horribly afraid, ye heavens; be ye very desolate." One is staggered by such expressions—the heavens called on to be "very desolate," as if they were likely to be unpeopled, or kept empty, through this hewing out of broken cisterns. The broken cistern below is the unfilled mansion above. Oh, if ye would do your part towards the occupancy of Heaven, if ye would be there yourselves, and so rather prevent vacancy, or leave not vacancy to be filled by such as were not "children of the kingdom," take heed that ye suffer not yourselves to be drawn aside from Christ; admit no system of theology of which Christ, Christ crucified, Christ glorified, is not the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. And let it warn you of the peril of missing Heaven—not through idleness, not through indifference; this is not the case contemplated, the idle man is not in the quarry, "hewing out the cistern"—but through misapplied energy, through misdirected endeavour—let it warn you of the peril of this, that the heavens are called on to be "very desolate"—ay, "very desolate;" in-

terpret it how you will, whether as emptying themselves of their shining hosts to behold the most astounding and afflicting of spectacles, or as likely to remain unoccupied through so sad and fatal an apostasy—the heavens are called on to be “very desolate,” when God’s people are to be charged with having forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to themselves cisterns that can hold no water.

Now this naturally brings us to that particular application of the text which seems required by the present anniversary. If the thing generally denounced in the passage before us be the abandonment of the true religion, for one either wholly false, or with admixtures of error, the denunciation must include the case of the forsaking the communion of a pure, Apostolical, Church, for that of a corrupt and idolatrous. But before such a case can be admitted to be that of leaving the Reformed Church, and joining the Roman, it will justly be required that the doctrines of the two Churches be set in opposition, or contrast, that so it may be seen whether in the one there be free access to the fountain of living waters, whilst in the other men are left to the hewing out broken cisterns, that can hold no water. We cannot expect, within such limits as are now left us, to draw out this contrast in all its extent and variety. But we may seize on leading facts, on prominent doctrines; and placing these the

one against the other, do enough to the vindicating what we claim for Protestantism, and to the proving what we charge upon Popery.

We pray you at once, and at the outset, to observe that we use the term Protestantism as defining in one great respect the character of the Anglican Church. And I will not shrink from the term Protestant, as though I thought it unbecoming a branch of Christ's "holy Catholic Church." Not that I glory in belonging to a protesting Church; I grieve too deeply that there should be errors, gross, fatal, errors, against which to protest. I glory in belonging to an Apostolical Church; I lament that such a Church is compelled to be protestant; but we cannot, of ourselves, part with our protesting character; the Roman Church must take that from us, and how? by violence? God helping, we will imitate our fathers, and deliver our protest in the face of persecution and death. By our returning into communion with the Roman Church, the Roman Church as it is? No, no: I trust we may say, we "have not so learned Christ." We will cease to be Protestants, when the Roman Church renounces the abominations against which we protest; till then, we must keep the name, we must keep the thing. As to that of which one has heard, of which one has read, unprotestantizing the Church, God in his mercy forbid this: we will pray, we will labour, to reform the Roman communion; better die than consent to Romanize the Reformed.

But if we are, if we must be, a protesting Church, let us understand thoroughly what it is against which we protest. We protest, not against the Roman Church, as though it were not, equally with our own, Apostolic in constitution, a branch of that Catholic Church in whose existence we profess belief whenever we repeat the creed. But we protest against numerous and grievous corruptions of primitive Christianity, which the Roman Church retains, and of which, through the blessing of God on the labours of confessors and martyrs, our own Church was enabled to rid herself at the Reformation. We protest against the doctrine of the pope's infallibility: unwarranted by Scripture, disproved by facts, it offers the Divine sanction to every error which an ignorant man may adopt, and to every practice which a vicious may enjoin. We protest against what we are forced to call the idolatry of the Papists; idolatry is the great plague-spot of Romanism: let them explain, let them excuse, let them extenuate, how they will, their gestures, their hymns, their prayers, are witnesses that they offer to the creature the worship which is due only to the Creator. We protest against the doctrine of transubstantiation, that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are actually turned into Christ's flesh and blood: if it were not contradicted by our senses, it is fatal to the Gospel; for, making Christ's body infinite and omnipresent, it interferes with the truth of our Saviour's human nature. We protest against

what is called the sacrifice of the mass; for we hold that Christ was offered once for all, and that it is impious to speak of repeating the oblation. We protest against the Romish doctrine of justification. The Papists mix up human merits with Christ's; they draw distinctions between venial and mortal sins; they introduce a whole train of subordinate mediators; and thus have so darkened the Gospel with fables and inventions, and substituted for the simple mode of acceptance by faith in the Redeemer, a complicated of their own, that, if they do not shut heaven against those who would enter, it is wondrous how any find the way of admission. We protest against the doctrine of purgatory; we protest against multiplied sacraments; against the withholding the cup from the laity; against keeping the Bible from the common people; against praying in an unknown tongue; against the tyrannies and indecencies of the confessional. We protest against all of these; though there may not be in all the same amount of error, there is in all much that is opposed to pure Christianity, and much that is likely to place the soul in peril. And even this rapid enumeration of subjects of protest may suffice to prove of the Reformed Church, that it has free access "to the fountain of living waters," whilst the Roman is hewing out "broken cisterns that can hold no water." The Bible, translated with all possible care, and given to every man to read, study, and pray over for himself; the Gospel, proclaimed in its simplicity; the sacrifice

of Christ presented as the alone procuring cause of our reconciliation; faith, the instrument of justification; holiness, the necessary produce of faith; un-mutilated sacraments; the ordinances of religion all administered in the vulgar tongue; having these privileges, hearing these truths, the members of the Reformed Church, we are bold to declare, have nothing to impede, but every thing to facilitate, their taking of those waters, whereof whosoever drinketh, he shall not taste death. But look on the other side of the picture;—the Bible jealously guarded, only doled out bit by bit, at the will, and with the interpretation, of an interested priesthood; no common prayer, or public worship, properly so called, for that is not common prayer in which the people cannot join; one-half of the blessed Communion denied to the people, so that it is doubtful, to say the least, whether they receive the Holy Sacrament; the “one Mediator between God and man” kept at such a distance, and made so difficult of approach, that you can only reach Him through the intercession of angels and saints; the pardon of sin so involved in difficulties, and complicated with subtleties, that the penitent must be tortured with doubts whilst he lives, and hope, at best, for mitigated punishment when he dies; fastings, scourgings, watchings, and multiplied austerities, imposed as a meritorious and expiatory endurance, and not as a merely wholesome and subjugatory discipline,—oh! is this what they would give us as the birthright, the inheritance of the

children of God? What do all these make up, if not a system of broken cisterns? What water can these hold for a thirsty soul? And, though broken, with what infinite pains have these cisterns been constructed! How true is it that they have been "hewn out." Truth was not corrupted in a single day, nor by a single act, nor by a single agent. It took centuries to build up this fatal system. The angel of darkness laboured at it, but commonly under the disguise of an angel of light. Men of high but misdirected intellect; reason, in her unchastened boldness; pride, in its unchecked presumption; ambition, that spurned all restraint; power, that would brook no control; these all gave themselves to the colossal work: and when Christianity came forth, beaten, darkened, ground, mutilated into Popery, oh, it was throned on high places, and it was shrined beneath magnificent domes, and it glittered with splendour; but it was just the simple made intricate at incalculable cost, and the precious which infinite pains had been taken to spoil.

The cisterns were "hewn out;" the noble block, which had only to be touched by the rod of the believer, and oh! how the living waters leaped from it, was laboriously chiselled into petty receptacles: fragments were broken off, and substituted for the whole; the chalice and the cup, wrought by human skill, if of Divine material, elaborated till it was scarce possible to recognize the original substance, distorted so studiously in form that the thirsty lip

could hardly find where to place itself, and some flaw so ingeniously concealed, that, while the water oozed away, the vessel still seemed entire,—ah! this was Popery, this is Popery. Miserable comforters, broken cisterns! Is this what we are to have in place of the exulting, the abounding, river which makes glad our Jerusalem, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit?” Men and brethren, compare the systems, compare the Churches, compare them in the light of Holy Scripture, and of Catholic antiquity, and you shall find no apter saying, than that, in the Reformed Church, Christianity gushes from the fountain; in the Roman, it is poured into broken cisterns.

And shall we leave the fountain for the cistern? Indeed there are some who would persuade us even to this: and there are others who would disguise or smooth away the differences between our own Church and the Roman, trying to persuade us that it is little more than prejudice which prevents our being at peace. God forbid that we should hearken to any such deceivers. The worst thing done in these days of theological bitterness and strife is, that sound Church principles are being brought into disrepute by their advocates, as though in upholding them it were needful either to put contempt on the Reformation, or to pay compliments to Romanism. Perish the principles, if principles they could be

called, which are to be defended by decrying those who reformed our Church, and flattering those who corrupted it. But this is not sound, this is not consistent, this is not high Churchmanship. The true Churchman feels that there is a vast gulph between him and the Papist—I do not say an impassable gulph; but the Papist must come over to him; he must not take a step towards the Papist; the Churchman made the gulph by putting from him certain errors and corruptions; and the Papist must destroy the gulph by putting them from him too. And if, in spite of what we know Popery to have been, and of what we know it to be, we would indulge any thought of reunion with the Roman Church, except through that Church's rejecting what we rejected when we separated from it—then might it be vain to look for audience amongst ourselves as the projected apostasy were denounced, so besotted must we be, so bent on our own undoing. But there shall not be wanting listeners, amazed and frightened listeners: the very heavens, that have gathered to themselves the “noble company of martyrs,” shall be astonished, and horribly afraid, and very desolate, and all because the purposed crime may justly be described as the forsaking the fountain of living waters for “broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

And now one brief word in conclusion with regard to the present anniversary. We cannot consider the Gunpowder plot, merely as having been

the treasonable scheme of a disaffected few, though we know, from historical documents, that not more than eighty persons were in any degree privy to it. The great thing to be observed is, that undoubtedly the object of this plot was the re-establishment of Popery. The chief leaders, such as Catesby and Piercy, were irritated at finding that Roman Catholics were not treated with greater indulgence by James I., from whom, as the descendant of the Scottish Mary, they had expected such concessions as they had not obtained from his predecessor Elizabeth. When they found these expectations disappointed, they resolved on an act which should not only be one of terrible vengeance, but which, by removing the chief foes to their religion, should make way for its speedy and triumphant re-establishment. And in all human probability Protestantism would have been buried with our princes and nobles beneath the ruins of the parliament-house, had the daring incendiary completed his work—even as it would have lost its ascendancy had not William III. taken the sceptre from his father-in-law's hand. Therefore should we join heartily in the thanksgiving of the day, and consider that the commemorated events are such as should be held in lasting and grateful remembrance. For we are not yet, we trust, come as a nation to the point at which sight is lost of the worth of the Reformation. We are not yet prepared to believe that it was for trivial and speculative points that our fathers gave themselves

readily to the rack and the stake. We may have forgotten our privileges in the day of our security; but let Protestantism be assailed, whether from without or from within—and I am not the one to deny, however to deplore, that the assault may be from within as well as from without—and I think, and I trust, that something of the same spirit will be roused in the land as though an invader's foot were on its shore, or a traitor in its councils.

But let an anniversary such as this set each of us to the diligently examining what Protestantism is, that we may know our advantages, the responsibilities which they entail, and the duties which they involve. We have the fountain of living waters. It is well that we carefully guard it; but do we also eagerly drink of it? We are not forced to seek water from broken cisterns. It is well that we expose the worthlessness of these cisterns; but do we remember that which St. Paul says to the Hebrews, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should *let them slip*?" the marginal reading is, "lest at any time we should *let them run out*" as leaking vessels. We ourselves may be the broken cisterns, receiving grace but only to lose it. Let us look to it then, that we be earnest, decided, consistent Protestants. But such Protestantism is for exhibition in the life, rather than for declamation on the platform. It is a real tract for the times, "Known and read of all men." Profounder humility, heartier

charity, more expansive benevolence, a more devoted consecration to the service of God—it is by these that Protestantism will be truly upheld, preserved to ourselves, transmitted to our children. Popery is not to be written down; it is to be lived down: and if we are to lose the advantages of the Reformation of the national Church, it will be mainly through the want of reformation in the national character. Each, then, as he strives to live more “holily, justly, and unblameably,” in the world, is doing his part towards preserving to his country that Protestantism which, under God, is verily its shield, its palladium. Each, on the other hand, as he suffers himself to be inflamed with evil passions, cherishing, or not striving to quench, the fires of lust, is, in his measure, the conspirator who would ignite a train charged with destruction to our laws, our liberties, our religion. Depart, then, resolving, in the strength of the living God, to be more thorough Christians than you have hitherto been. This is the great practical use to be made of such a commemoration as the present. There is a Gunpowder plot to be detected and defeated: you must detect it by searching the dark recesses of the heart; you must defeat it by letting your light shine more brightly than ever before men.

SERMON XIII.¹

THE MACEDONIAN PHANTOM.

Acts xvi. 9, 10.

“ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night ; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.”

THE Apostles, and first preachers of Christianity, differed greatly from ourselves, in that they were endowed with extraordinary gifts, and miraculous powers. But it is distinctly to be observed, that they were not, on this account, exempt from the necessity of exercising faith. It might have been thought, that, possessed as they were of superhuman might, and privileged with immediate revelations of the will of God, there would have been, in their

¹ Preached at York on behalf of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

case, but little opportunity or demand for that trust, or dependence, which is among the chief things required from ourselves. But God so ordered his dealings with them, that, notwithstanding their wondrous endowments, they appear to have had the same life to lead as any one of us, who, always in weakness, and often in darkness, must labour at duty, and submit to trial. That the Apostles were able to work miracles, did not secure to them the supply even of their daily wants. St. Paul, in reckoning up to the Corinthians his multiplied endurances in the cause of the Gospel, enumerates "hunger, and thirst, and fastings;" and you will all remember how this Apostle, anxious to prevent his being burdensome to the churches which he had planted, wrought at the business of a tentmaker, and thus earned what was necessary for his subsistence. It was a strange, but an instructive, spectacle, that of a man who could heal the sick, and raise the dead, obliged to labour, like a common artizan, in order to the procuring a meal. Would not the energy, which sufficed for so many and greater wonders, have availed to the obtaining, without all this drudgery, the supply of every-day wants? But God, we may believe, in order to keep his servant dependent on himself, would not allow him to exercise, on his own behalf, the powers which were so mighty in subjugating the world; but, whilst He enabled him to shake the vast fabric of heathenism, and placed, in a certain sense, all the elements of

nature under his control, obliged him to be industrious, in order to the warding off starvation, and required from him all that diligent and faithful use of instituted means, which is required from the lowest and weakest of his people.

Then, again, it is true that Apostles had the gift of prophecy, and that, privileged with immediate revelation, they knew far more than common men of the will and purposes of the Almighty. But it is very observable, that this their insight into futurity was no more allowed than their power of working miracles, to destroy, or even to diminish, the necessity for the exertion of faith in regard of themselves. You might have thought that men, gifted with the faculty of anticipating events, and determining long beforehand what God had appointed to take place, would have never been at any loss with regard to their own plans, but would have been saved all that doubt and perplexity in which we ourselves are necessarily involved, from not knowing what a day may bring forth. Yet this was far from being the case. The Apostles appear to have had just our trials of faith; they were called upon for the same patient waiting on God, the same watching the leadings of his Providence, the same studying the minute indications of his will. Able to pierce futurity, and discern "the man of sin," opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, St. Paul was nevertheless unable to make arrangements for a journey, with any certainty that he should be

allowed to accomplish it. Hear how he speaks to the Thessalonians: "Therefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us." He had often, you see, desired and planned a visit to Thessalonica; but, as often, some obstacle had arisen, which had been as completely unforeseen by him as though the gift of prophecy had in no degree been possessed. Thus, as with the gift of miracles, so with that of prophecy, God allowed nothing to interfere with simple, prayerful, dependence upon Himself. He brought it to pass that those whom He enabled to marshal before them the august and awful occurrences of distant centuries, should, in their private capacity, be as thoroughly obliged to the "walking by faith, not by sight," as any one of ourselves from whom the future veils all its secrets, except those which prophets have been commissioned to announce.

If you look at the verses which immediately precede our text, you will find abundant evidence that St. Paul and his companions were required, like ourselves, to go forward in faith, uninformed as to the precise course which God would have them take, but acting on the assurance that He directs the steps of all such as commit themselves to his guidance. In the sixth verse you read, "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." Their intention had evidently been "to preach the word in Asia;" but they were not

allowed to carry their intention into effect; God interfered to prevent it: St. Paul had, no doubt, prayed to be directed aright; but to keep faith in exercise, he was permitted, in the first instance, to determine wrong. Then in the next verse you read, "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." Still, you see, they are only as men feeling their way: it seemed to them, that, Asia being closed, Bithynia presented the most desirable field of labour, and accordingly they took measures for entering that province. But again they were proved wrong: it was not to Bithynia that God meant them to turn; and they are still in doubt as to what course to pursue. At last, there is granted unto Paul the vision recorded in our text, from which he is enabled assuredly to gather that the Lord designed him to preach in Macedonia. Yet, what a roundabout method this seems of communicating information: what delay, what loss of time! Why was not the Apostle, in the first instance, explicitly told what the will of God was, in place of being left to make useless plans as to Asia and Bithynia? and why, at last, was he only taught through the medium of a vision, which might have admitted of diverse interpretations, and in regard of which there might even have been doubt whether it was indeed to be received as a communication from God? We will not say that such questions can be satisfactorily answered: we will not even say that they can

with propriety be put. But at least we may gather a lesson for ourselves from what is thus recorded of St. Paul. We see that even St. Paul was thrown upon his faith; that he had to find out the will of God by successive experiments; that the leadings of God's providence, in regard even of this his favoured and exemplary servant, were obscure and circuitous; and that, so far from the Apostle being allowed to ascertain long beforehand how to shape his course, he had to grope his way step by step, doubtful whether he was to turn to the north or to the south, and obliged to make the attempt, in order to the determining whether it were what God approved. Shall we then wonder, or shall we repine, if God demand from us the exercise of faith, if He show us not, at once, and by any unquestionable manifestation, what his will concerning us may be, but require from us the patient waiting upon Him, and exercise us by the frequent frustration of our plans?

We hear much of the leadings of God's providence; and it is our business, as Christians, to be always on the watch for these leadings; assured that, as God taught his people of old, by the cloud upon the tabernacle, when they were to rest, and when to set forward, He will not fail now to vouchsafe guidance to those, who, in all their ways, acknowledge Him, and lean not to their own understandings. But we are not to expect that the leadings of providence will be always, or even often, very marked and distinct. This would be to change the character

of the dispensation beneath which we live: for if the pillar of fire and of cloud went visibly before us, it would be by sight, and no longer by faith, that Christians were required to walk. Let us not hastily conclude that God's providence marks out for us this or that course; and let us be specially circumspect, when the path, which appears thus prescribed, happens to be one which agrees with our own wishes. It is the easiest thing in the world to imagine the leadings of providence, where we have already got the leadings of inclination. And we may learn from the instance of St. Paul, that, even where there is prayerfulness, and the meek wish of entire submission, it may be only by dark intimations, and after many frustrations, that God's providence will mark out our course. Oh, who shall marvel that he has not direct and immediate answers to prayer, that faith is kept in exercise by the scantiness, so to speak, of the guidance vouchsafed, that he is often able only to conjecture God's will, and must take a step in doubt as to the rightness of the course—who, we say, shall marvel at this, if he duly remember that even St. Paul, when engaged in the high work of evangelizing the earth, was suffered to plan the going into Asia, but prevented by God, and then to essay the going into Bithynia, but once more prevented; and that, at last, he was only guided into Macedonia, by seeing a dim figure at his bedside, in the stillness of night, which pronounced the dubious words, "Come over, and help us?"

But we would now lead you along a wholly different train of thought: we will simply suppose that information is given to St. Paul in and through a vision of the night, when sleep had fallen upon him; and we will see whether this fact is not fraught with instruction. The case of St. Paul is not indeed peculiar; for you must all remember how common it was, in earlier days, for God to communicate with his servants as they lay asleep; what frequent use was made of dreams and visions, when intimations were to be given of the Divine will and purposes. We cannot but think that there is something to be learnt from this which is generally overlooked; and we will therefore engage your attention for a while with a few remarks, and inferences, which may not perhaps have occurred to yourselves.

There is not one of you who does not consider that sleep is a sort of image of death. There is so evident a resemblance between the sleeping and the dead—sleep, like death, withdrawing us from the visible world, suspending our faculties, closing our senses, and incapacitating us for taking part in what is passing around—that the dullest imagination might invent the simile for itself, and would never have to wait till it found it among the metaphors of poetry. The heathen, dark as were their notions of another state of being, spake of death as a sleep; and Scripture, from the very first, made use of the figure—kings and patriarchs, when they died, were said to have “slept with their fathers;” in the New Testament,

the same imagery is retained: "the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth," was the expression of our Lord in regard of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue; and St. Paul, when he would comfort Christians sorrowing for the dead, reminds them, that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." But we need not be at any pains to prove to you either the fitness or the frequency of the metaphor by which death is likened unto sleep. You will all readily assent to the fitness, and your own memories will furnish proofs of the frequency. Our business is now with the pointing out, that the metaphor has not been carried to its proper extent, and that therefore men have drawn from it but a small portion of the truth which it is intended to convey. I do indeed think that God designed sleep as the standing image of death, so that men might continually be reminded, by the lying down in their beds, of the approach of a time when they must lie down in their graves. But I think also that God hereby meant to fix their thoughts, not only on their dying, but on their rising from the dead. Why, when every morning calls us from our beds, strung with new energy, and, as it were, freshened into a new life—why are we to speak of sleep, as though it imaged our death, but not also our resurrection? The metaphor is evidently as accurate in the one respect as in the other. And I can hardly doubt, that, as there are many processes in nature which suggest to the thoughtful enquirer the great change

which is to pass over us, and our reappearance on a higher stage of being, so was the rising of the sun, which seems, every morning, to repeople the solitudes, to call all nature from the sepulchre of night, and crowd once more the earth with animated being, intended to impress on the most cursory observer that the sleep of death is not to be perpetual, but shall terminate with the dawning of a day, when "all that are in the graves" shall hear a heavenly voice, and start forth from their resting-places. I cannot think, that the doctrine of a resurrection was not taught, whilst, though there might have been no immediate revelation on so sublime a point, men lay down at night to take their rest, and awoke in the morning reinvigorated and renewed. Whilst sleep imaged death with such accuracy, that scarcely any one, as he gazed on a slumbering fellow-creature, could fail to be reminded of a colder and a longer repose, every one, had he but fairly followed out the showings of the metaphor, might at least have conjectured, if he could not have proved, that the dead shall yet stir in their narrow beds, and be roused again to consciousness and activity.

But, whatever the degree in which the truth of a resurrection might have been inferred from the phenomena of sleeping and waking, there can be no debate that the figure, or metaphor, holds good in every particular, so that sleep is an accurate image of death, not only whilst it lasts, but also when it terminates. And when we find the image so commonly

adopted in Scripture, we may safely conclude that God designed to fix our attention on the phenomena of sleep, that we might learn from them something of the mysteries of death. The falling asleep represents to us the act of dying; the waking again represents to us our rising from the dead. But let us further see whether our condition, whilst asleep, may not furnish notices of our condition whilst we lie amongst the dead. This would only seem consistent with the character of the metaphor: if the falling asleep figure to us our dying, and the waking our rising, it is but natural to suppose that the intermediate state, the state between the falling asleep and the waking, must bear some resemblance to that wherein we shall remain between our dying and our rising from the dead. Let us see whether there be not warrant for making this further use of the metaphor, and what truths may be thereby illustrated or confirmed.

In sleep, as we all know, "it is not the whole man, it is only the earthly part, that falleth asleep¹." The bodily senses and faculties are suspended from their usual exercise; but the mind is more than commonly active. What flights will the soul take during sleep: how will it travel to the very ends of the earth, the very limits of creation: what conversations will it hold with known or unknown beings—nay, occasionally, as though the soul gained vigour

¹ Jones of Nayland.

through being temporarily emancipated from the shackles of the body, men find themselves, in their dreams, reasoning with greater clearness, understanding more thoroughly, and composing more freely, than they have been used to in their waking hours. It may be well doubted whether the soul is ever inactive: we do not always remember our dreams; but, probably, we always dream: we remember our dreams, when our sleep has been disturbed, and we have passed what we call a restless night; but it may not be our restlessness which has made us dream—we might have equally dreamt, had our sleep been profound—our restlessness may only have caused that our dreams are remembered, whilst a deeper, a less broken, sleep would have prevented their leaving any legible impression. And what ought we to gather from this activity of the soul during sleep? Surely, that the soul shall be active, whilst the body lies dead. This is only keeping up the metaphor. The representation has been most accurate hitherto—the falling asleep corresponding to dying, the waking up to rising again, and the suspension of the bodily organs and senses from their accustomed exercises being much the same, except as to duration, in the slumbering and the dead. Why then should we not give completeness to the imagery, by supposing that the condition of the soul during the continuance of sleep, corresponds to that during the continuance of death? I really seem hardly to need the profound arguments of the

metaphysician, or the theologian, in order to the being convinced that the soul is not in a state of torpor whilst the body is in the grave: I have evidence enough in my very dreams. You know that it has often been a debated point, whether the soul will not be insensible, when separated from the body; whether the interval, from death to the resurrection, will not be one of utter unconsciousness, our immortal part, like our mortal, undergoing the complete suspension of every faculty and power. There is good testimony from the nature of the case, and still better from Scripture, that the soul shall not be thus unconscious, but, immediately on leaving the body, shall enter on a state of happiness or misery. Yet, take from me all this testimony, and I say again, that my very dreams might persuade me of the fact. That my soul is not inactive and unconscious, whilst my body is asleep, seems to witness to me, so as to place beyond doubt, that my soul shall not be inactive and unconscious whilst my body lies dead. The state of sleep is the standing image of the state of death: and, taking the metaphor as every way accurate, I infer, from the soul's not sleeping with the body, the soul's not dying with the body. I know that dreams are wild and wandering things—but they betoken the soul's activity; and, yet more, they prove the soul susceptible of pleasure and pain, whilst the body lies insensible. What anguish we sometimes undergo in our dreams: what terrible scenes we pass through: what thorough

wretchedness is experienced: what relief it is to wake, and find it but a dream! On the other hand, what bright visions sometimes visit us: what gladness takes possession of us! we have reached the summit of happiness, and enjoy what we have long sought; and it is actual grief to us when the dream passes, and we are once more amongst the cold realities of earth. And thus our very dreams might teach us, that we shall be experiencing either misery or happiness, whilst the soul is separated from the body; that the separation shall not take from us the power, whether of enjoying good or enduring evil; and that allotments of the one or of the other shall be apportioned to us between death and the resurrection.

Neither is this all that may be said in regard of the illustration of our state in death, which may be derived from that in sleep. There is to be added what may be learnt from such passages of Scripture as our text, which teach us, that, whilst the body is asleep, the soul may be receiving instruction. It is every way observable, as we have already remarked, that God should have made such frequent use of visions or dreams, in the communicating intimations of his will. He might have given these intimations through many other modes; ought we not then to conclude that there was some special design in the selecting a method, which, to say the least, seems wanting in the clearness and convincingness which might have been obtained by a different course?

We consider that nothing can be more vague or uncertain, than a dream: yet God gave instruction by and through dreams—and that too more especially before life and immortality had been brought to light by the Gospel; for it was in the earlier ages of the world, when but little Revelation had as yet been vouchsafed, that dreams were more commonly made the vehicle of instruction. And it may have been, that, in the thus frequently employing dreams, and employing them more frequently whilst there was less distinct information as to man's state after death, God's purpose was to direct attention to the capacity of the soul for receiving instruction, yet not through the organs of the body, but whilst those organs might be closed, and unable to discharge their ordinary offices. At all events, this is practically the result of the frequent use of dreams, that we are taught, beyond the power of controversy, that the soul, when loosened from the body, may be gaining great accessions of knowledge, and growing in acquaintance with the will of the Almighty, and the secrets of the universe.

So that we now make up what was wanting in the illustration of death, as derived from the phenomena of sleep; and may assert the picture perfect. The lying down at night should represent to us the lying down in the grave, and the rising in the morning our resurrection from the dead. But sleep seizes only on the body: it leaves the soul free, free to use its own powers, yea, more independent in their

use than often whilst the body is awake. And this should inform us that our state between death and the resurrection is not to be a state of inactivity and unconsciousness ; but that throughout that mysterious interval, the interval from the body's falling asleep to its starting up again at the voice of the Son of man, the soul shall be in full possession, and in full exercise, of her own peculiar faculties ; not reduced into insensibility or torpor, but rather the more quickened, and made the more susceptible, through having cast off the weight and incumbrance of the flesh. But, nevertheless, you may doubt whether the soul will then experience either happiness or misery ; whether, till the general judgment have assigned the portion for eternity, there will be any feeling either of pleasure or of pain. Here, however, sleep gives its testimony : dreams, producing at one time keen anguish, at another rich delight, should teach us, that, whilst the body lies slumbering in the grave, the soul shall not only be susceptible of pleasure and pain, but shall experience either one or the other, a foretaste of that everlasting portion which will be assigned to it at the general resurrection.

And now there remains but one other question, a question of high interest indeed, and not so readily to be answered from a mere observing the facts and phenomena of sleep. Will the soul, in her separation from the body whilst the body is in the grave, acquire more and more knowledge ? Will she be able,

whilst she is deprived of those bodily organs through which she here gathers in knowledge, to receive communications from God, intimations of his will, manifestations of his glory? You might dispute the accuracy of the picture were I here again to appeal to dreams vouchsafed to ourselves. For though there may still occasionally be instances of remarkable dreams, intelligence appearing to be sent through dreams as a vehicle, there is so general an indisposition to the recognizing a Divine interference with human affairs, that few would admit these instances as helping to establish any theory. But Scripture comes in just where our evidence might be defective or doubtful: God's recorded dealings with the sleeping enable us⁷ to complete the sketch of the condition of the dead. God made his choicest revelations to his servants of old whilst they were asleep. Whilst they slept He whispered to them promises, gave them commandments, unveiled to them secrets. Then I have no fears that the soul, when detached from the body by death, may be unable to make progress in acquaintance with high and heavenly things. She may be receiving rich instruction, and drawing in fresh stores of glorious truth, before as well as after the resurrection of the body. The separate state shall not be a state of dull inactivity or low attainment: that state is imaged by sleep: and as if to tell me what the righteous may expect in the separate state, God hath come to his servants in visions of the night, and taught them

in sleep what they had vainly striven to discover when awake. And now I am not to be made to believe, because of any metaphysical difficulties, that the soul, detached from the body, will be incapable of apprehending or appreciating the glories of the invisible world; for I can think of Jacob sleeping at Bethel, and yet beholding the ladder that reached from earth to heaven, and hearing the voice of the Lord God Almighty who stood at its summit. Neither can I give room to any fears that, whilst the flesh lies slumbering in the grave, the soul will not be admitted into acquaintance with portions of God's will which it may vainly have endeavoured to ascertain whilst on earth: enough that St. Paul, whilst awake, had meditated to preach in Asia, and assayed to go into Bithynia, seeking fruitlessly to determine what God's will might be; and yet that St. Paul, in sleep, which is the image of death, was thoroughly instructed in regard of that will—there stood by him, in a vision, “a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.”

We have yet to notice St. Paul's interpretation of the vision; and here we have a point of as much interest and instruction as either of those which have already been examined. “And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.” We may suppose that the Apostle had some way of distinctly satisfy-

ing himself that the vision was from God: he was not left in any doubt as to whether the Macedonian phantom were the mere creation of his own fancy, or whether it were indeed a messenger from the invisible world. But there is no reason to think that any further revelation was added: the expression, "assuredly gathering," implies that the disciples were left to draw the inference from the vision; that they were not told what to do, except so far as directions were contained in what the phantom said, "Come over and help us." And the thing which they "assuredly gathered" was, that "the Lord had called them for to preach the Gospel unto them" of Macedonia. They never seem to have imagined that there might be any other way in which they could help the Macedonians, that the Macedonians could want any other sort of help: the invitation, "Come over and help us," could bear, according to them, but one interpretation, "Come over, and preach the Gospel to us."

Do you not, then, see that St. Paul and his companions lived for only one object? do you not further see that they acknowledged but one remedy for all the diseases, one supply for all the wants, of the world? They lived for only one object: invited into a new country, they could have but one purpose in going thither, that of making Christ known to its inhabitants. They acknowledged but one remedy for human diseases, one supply for human wants: called upon for help, they never enquired what help

was needed, but “assuredly gathered” that the Gospel was to be preached. Ah, how very different would it be amongst ourselves! Let the phantom be sent to one of our statesmen; let the form of the wild Indian, or of the African, stand by his bedside in the stillness of the midnight, and breathe, in accents compelling his attention, the simple entreaty, “Come over and help us,” and how would the politician interpret the call? He would probably conclude that ruthless foes were invading the distant country; and his first, his only thought, might be to send an army to its succour. Or let the spectre go and speak to one of our merchants—he would presently think of commercial embarrassments or commercial openings: he would imagine that the trade of the half-civilized country required to be put on a sound footing, and directed into right channels; and if he “assuredly gathered” any thing, it would perhaps be that he must at once freight a vessel, and send out a mercantile establishment. Or if it were even to one of our benevolent and philanthropic men that the phantom addressed itself, the likelihood is, that, on hearing of help as being wanted by a distant nation or community, he would set himself to the making inquiries into the special necessities of that people—were they visited with famine? were they laid waste by pestilence? and he would hesitate as to what help could be given, till he had made out some particular and temporal evil under which they were labouring.

And yet, whatever our calling or occupation, we are all professed servants of Christ, and all bound, by the vows of our profession, to take as our chief object the advancing Christ's kingdom. It was not merely because St. Paul's business was that of a preacher that he interpreted a cry for help into a cry for the Gospel: St. Paul was also a tent-maker; St. Luke, who was with him, appears to have been a physician: but it never occurred to either the one or the other, that assistance might be wanted to teach a trade or heal a disease: their ruling desire was that of glorifying Christ; all else was subordinate to this; they could not, therefore, be invited into a country and not seize on the invitation as an opening for Christianity. They might find other help besides spiritual help needed when they reached Macedonia; but they could have but one great purpose in going to Macedonia—that of planting the cross in a new region of idolatry. Or, if you take the other view of their inference and determination, if you suppose, that with the politician, the merchant, or the philanthropist, they would make enquiry into the special circumstances of the Macedonians—what an estimate did they form of the worth and power of Christianity, in reaching but one conclusion, that they were called to preach the Gospel. They formed a right estimate, though one, alas! which we are practically loath to hold in common with them. They computed that, let the particular evils be what they might which wrung

from the Macedonians the cry for assistance—war, or famine, or anarchy, or pestilence—they should take to them the most suitable and the most effectual of remedies, in simply taking to them the Gospel of Christ. They thought, and they believed, that in carrying Christianity to a land, they were carrying that which would best rectify disorders, alleviate distresses, assuage sorrows, and multiply happiness. And, therefore, they never stopped to consider whether they had at their disposal the particular engine which, on a human computation, might be suited for counteracting a particular evil—enough that they had the Gospel to preach; and they felt that they had an engine which could in no case be inappropriate, and in none inefficient.

Would that the like estimate of Christianity were practically held amongst ourselves; that, entreated by the Macedonian for help, we felt at once, that if we sent him Christianity, we should send him what he wanted, though it might not be what he asked. The Gospel is really this universal engine, the remedy for all diseases, the supply of all wants—but we distrust it, and are for assisting if not superseding it with inventions of our own. Introduced into the households and hearts of a people, it will quickly do immeasurably more than politicians could ever dictate, or philosophers devise, for raising that people in the scale of civilization, disseminating amongst them arts and sciences, destroying feuds, jealousies, and contentions, and diffusing the elements of real great-

ness and real happiness. Let us learn, from the example of St. Paul, to set a higher value on the Gospel: whether it be as a nation or as individuals that we are called upon by the Macedonian for help; whether the cry, borne from heathen lands, be a cry specifically for religious instruction, or the cry generally of suffering and degraded humanity—oh, that with St. Paul we might know and feel, that having deposited with us “the truth as it is in Jesus,” we have a blessing to transmit which cannot fail to meet the exigence; oh, that we might show our sense of the universal suitableness and efficiency of Christianity, by “assuredly gathering” that the Lord hath called us to the preaching the Gospel!

And let another lesson be also drawn from the conduct of St. Paul and his companions. Observe how ready they were to obey God’s will the moment they had ascertained it. “Immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia.” The expression implies that there were difficulties in the way; but there was an instant effort at overcoming them. It had not been into Macedonia that they had been wishing or purposing to go: and unbelief might have suggested, Shall we let a phantom guide us? ought we not at least to wait for some less dubious intimation? But no; there was sufficient reason to think that God’s will was now discovered; and there was nothing to be done but to hasten to the sea, and seek the means of embarking. Alas, we are all ready enough to follow the leadings of God’s providence when they concur with our own wish;

but how reluctant are we, yea, often how rebellious, when God points in one direction, and inclination in another! This is the trial—to set out for Macedonia, to which duty calls us, in place of staying at Troas, to which our own wishes bind us. But a Christian should have no will of his own: he is the servant of a Master in heaven, and the only thing for him to ascertain is, where that Master would have him work, and what He would have him do. Has the phantom been at his bedside? has the man of Macedonia glided before him, delivering a summons in which he has clearly heard the voice of his Master? Then he ought not to confer with flesh and blood. He is indeed to take every just means for assuring himself that he is not deceived; that the phantom has not been woven from the imagining of his own brain, but has really been sent to him by his Master. But this having been duly done, there is no room for hesitation, no place for deliberation: obstacles are not to be considered, difficulties not made of account: go forward, forward in faith; for the phantom shall rise up at the judgment, and accuse the Christian of indolence, or cowardice, or want of self-denial, if, after having heard the call, “Come over, and help us,” it could not be said of him, “Immediately he endeavoured to go into Macedonia.”

And are we not summoned to Macedonia? Has not the phantom crossed the seas, and stood upon our shores? and is not the voice for assistance shrill, and clear, and piercing? My brethren, the voice is yet more thrilling, and more plain-

tive, than that which fell, in night visions, on the ear of St. Paul. It is the voice, not only of the Macedonian, the foreigner, the heathen; it is the voice of our own countrymen. It is from our own country, from our own colonies, that the cry is heard, "Come over and help us." Pleading this day for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, whose special field of labour is our own vast empire, at home and abroad, it is to the voice, as issuing from our towns and our colonies, that my office bids me ask your earnest attention.

For nearly one hundred and fifty years has this society been engaged in its noble but arduous work. And it has extraordinary claims on the liberality of Christians—I shall not hesitate to say, greater claims than any other; its especial field of labour being, as we have just said, our own vast empire; and for whom are we so much bound to provide Christian instruction, as for those millions of our fellow-subjects who, at home or in foreign lands, whether natives of the soil or emigrants from amongst ourselves, are destitute of that instruction which maketh wise unto salvation? The heathen are not excluded from the operations of this society: in India its labours are strictly missionary: it spreads the knowledge of salvation amongst idolaters and Mahomedans: it was the first society to assist missions in the East—though, alas! what are its most earnest efforts amongst one hundred millions of accountable beings, subjects to the same earthly sovereign with

ourselves, but ignorant of that heavenly King whose sceptre we profess to acknowledge?

It is however chiefly amongst our own countrymen that the society, whose cause I now advocate, exhausts its resources. Think of the countrymen at home. Think of the necessity for schools, for Bibles, for religious books. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge strives to meet this necessity. If it do not actually rear the school-houses, it supplies the implements of a sound Christian education, and is thus mainly instrumental to the diffusion of really valuable knowledge in our scattered villages and crowded cities. But turn from your countrymen at home to your countrymen abroad. Know ye any thing of the spiritual destitution of these countrymen? Let me briefly sketch it to you—you should know something of the spiritual destitution of our colonies, if you would know what a field is open to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and kindred institutions. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge aids foreign missions by grants of money and of books, and by translations both of the Bible and Prayer Book—I cannot therefore plead for this society without mentioning foreign operations. Look then at British North America in its three divisions of the Canadas and Nova Scotia. Here you have a population of nearly a million and a half, scattered over an enormous tract of country; but the whole number of clergy employed in these provinces does not much exceed two hundred. Is

there no cry thence, "Come over and help us?" Look at Newfoundland, with a population of eighty or ninety thousand, dispersed amongst the bays and creeks of an intricate and inhospitable coast—there may be from thirty to forty clergy to minister to these many thousands. Look at Australia, the enormous continent whence future nations are to spring, where we see already the foundations of an empire, which, if it began in the felon and the slave, may yet give laws to half the globe—you have here, perhaps, one hundred and forty thousand of your countrymen, for whom, by a mighty strain, our Church Societies support from forty to fifty clergymen. Is there no piercing cry, "Come over and help us?"

I blush to proceed with such an enumeration. I hear much of the wonderfulness, the gloriousness, of our colonial empire. They tell me that on its vast outspread the sun never sets, and that the Roman eagle, in its most magnificent sweep, never gathered under its wing so ample a territory. But I see no elements of strength in an empire where there is no adequate provision for religious instruction. At the best, such an empire is compounded, like the feet of the great image, of the iron and the clay: the true principle of coherence is wanting; and extent can only ensure more tremendous dissolution. As a nation, we have done little or nothing for the maintenance of religion in our colonies—forgetting, to say the least, that colonies cannot, for a long time,

from the very nature of the case, provide religious instruction for themselves. Hereafter, when they shall have settled themselves in opulence and strength, they will rear a native clergy, and give endowments to a church. But whilst the mother country pours in every year its thousands of emigrants, how can instruction be furnished for the ever-growing demand, unless we send shepherds as well as sheep to the waste and the wilderness?

We have been sorely negligent herein. We have got rid of our surplus population, the artisans and the peasants, who could not wring subsistence from our overstocked factories and fields. We have encouraged, we have assisted, them to emigrate, that we might have ampler room at home and less desperate competition; and then, having cast them on a foreign shore, we have left them without schools, without churches, without pastors, without Bibles, and yet have expected them to remain loyal to their sovereign, though they might not be faithful to their God.

It is time that we roused ourselves, and wiped off the national disgrace. If reasons of state prevent the legislature from supplying what is needed, private benevolence must step forward and undertake the work. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge labours hand in hand with that for the Propagation of the Gospel to meet the ever-growing demand. But the resources of both are cramped—what then is to be done? Done? you will give the

answer, for your part, to-day. The society is to be liberally supported: the cry, "Come over and help us," is to be heard and answered: efforts are to be made, sacrifices are to be made; and you will make them this day. You will clear your own consciences; you will set an example to others; and from this city, we trust, shall a voice go forth to other districts of our land, the answer to the voice from Macedonia. Yes, dwellers on distant shores, dwellers in our own swarming towns, the phantom has been with us: he has roused us from our lethargy: we have heard the summons, "Come over and help us:" and henceforward we will spare no pains, no cost, to communicate unto you the bread of life, for we assuredly gather that God hath "called us to preach the Gospel unto you."

SERMON XIV.¹

EDUCATION.

PROVERBS xxiii. 15.

“My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.”

OUR moral constitution is such, that whilst there is any thing like a healthful play of our powers and sensibilities, we derive pain and pleasure from the pain and pleasure of others, so that to grieve a fellow-creature is to grieve ourselves, and to make him happy is to increase our own happiness. There may, indeed, be such a derangement of the moral constitution, that the very reverse shall take place: hatred and revengefulness may acquire such power, that something like gratification is derived from the misery of an enemy, and envy will undoubtedly look with dislike and distress on the prosperity of a rival.

¹ Preached at Liverpool, on behalf of the National Schools.

But these instances tell nothing against the truth of our being made to “rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep;” they only prove that we are so constituted, as to be intimately acted on by the condition of others, but so disordered by sin that the springs work the wrong way, making the pleasure come from the pain, and the pain from the pleasure; though the precise reverse would be the case were the mechanism repaired, and its several wheels set to rights. And when the Psalmist delivered his general maxim, that in keeping God’s commandments there is great reward, he may be thought to have had regard to love as the fulfilment of the law; for certainly if love fulfil the law, there is a present reward in keeping the law: we cannot love our neighbour without feeling him in some sense a part of ourselves; and then our own happiness is multiplied through the adding to it his. True indeed, if we thus make his happiness our own, we must also make his misery: but then sharing another’s grief makes that grief lighter to the sufferer; and surely there is a satisfaction, yea, a pleasure in pain, if it help, in any way, to the soothing one whom we love.

Thus we may fairly give it, not only as one of the features in our moral constitution, but as one great motive to thankfulness to our Creator, that we are to be made happy through the happiness of others, as well as through the direct communication to ourselves of the material of happiness. And hence we

can be justly and powerfully urged to the doing or the forbearing certain things, on the principle that others will be thereby affected, whether for evil or for good. The man of the greatest selfishness may not shut himself up in himself, declaring that he cares not for an effect upon others, and that if you would move him you must speak simply of effects upon himself. The effect upon others will, in a greater or less degree, if not through direct impact yet through reflection, be an effect upon himself; and it may often be but an appeal to his selfishness, to entreat him to act as though he were divested of selfishness. The moral constitution, if obstinately thwarted, is continually avenging itself: he who strives to live for himself, and thus does violence to a great law of his nature, eats of the fruit of his own ways, and has disquietudes forced upon him by the disquietudes of others.

But to confine ourselves to a particular case, how powerful is or should be the motive to the doing or the forbearing certain things, which is derived from the effect that will be thereby produced on those with whom we have the most intimate association. You may think it, if you will, but an exaggerated expectation, that men may be influenced in their actions by the consequences of those actions on the unknown and remote, consequences which may, in some way or measure, return upon themselves. But take the case of parties bound together by the closest ties of relationship, surely there is nothing fanciful or

far-fetched in expecting that it will be a motive of great power with the one, that such or such an action will have great effect upon the other. Here, at all events, the reciprocity is so immediate and acknowledged—unless, indeed, the moral constitution have sustained far more than the ordinary derangement—that we may safely take it as amounting to nearly the same thing, if we show a parent or a child, for example, that he will benefit himself, or that he will benefit that other who is but part of himself. And it would seem to be upon this principle that Solomon proceeds in delivering the words of our text. There can be no debate that he wishes to furnish his son with a motive to the doing right. But whence does he fetch this motive? Not from the immediate effect upon the son, but from the immediate effect upon himself. “My heart shall rejoice, even mine.” He repeats it, you observe, that there might be no mistake: it is not, “thy heart shall rejoice,” but “my heart, even mine.” Yet we may not think that Solomon was here urging on his son the making a sacrifice of his own happiness in order to promote his. He was rather saying to him, Make me happy, and that will make yourself. If he left out all mention of the child’s happiness, and spake only of his own, we may be sure that he proceeded on the acknowledged principle that such is the association between the parent and the child, that what was done to gladden the father would be most effectual in causing gladness to the son. And

we have, therefore, in our text a very peculiar, but a very touching appeal to children—an appeal that they strive to do right for the sake of the pleasure which their so doing will cause to their parents. But then the child might be disposed to meet this appeal with a sort of remonstrance, as though it were somewhat unreasonable to require him to act with a view to the happiness of another, rather than his own. We have taken pains, therefore, at the very outset, to remove this objection by fixing thought on the intimacy of the association between parent and child, showing you that it can only be where there is some monstrous disruption, some fearful want of natural affection, that the one can make the other happier, and not also make himself. Let this be borne in mind as we proceed with our discourse, and no child will say that he is not sufficiently left to consult his own interests, if we expect it to have great weight with him in deciding or regulating his conduct, that a father or a mother, as if requiring him to act without thought for himself, may address him, and urge him, in the language of Solomon, “My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.”

But now let us proceed to the more distinct examination of the passage, and to the endeavour at extracting from it its several lessons, whether to parents or children. Our foregoing remarks have gone to the showing, that if a child do that which will make a parent happier, he does that which will

also make himself. It may, perhaps, seem necessary to qualify these remarks, by observing that undoubtedly the parent may be seeking happiness where it is not to be found; and that consequently the child, if it follow the parent's wish, may only be heaping up material of disquietude for both. This, however, does not touch the general argument as to such an association between parent and child, that what generates happiness or unhappiness to the one, must, by reflection, generate happiness or unhappiness to the other. If, indeed, either mistake wherein true happiness lies, and lead the other to share his mistake, it will be unhappiness which is ultimately produced—produced not only in one, but in both; but this will but confirm the principle on which we insist, showing how the two act the one upon the other, though showing also the importance of seeking in a right direction for that which it is so disastrous to seek for in a wrong.

And here it is that we must entreat you to observe what it was that the child was to acquire, in order that Solomon's heart might rejoice. Solomon was a great king, reigning over a mighty and prosperous people: but he was not so distinguished by the extent of dominion, or the vastness of wealth, as by his wisdom, his profound acquaintance with every department of knowledge. And what, then, was likely to have been uppermost in the desires of Solomon on behalf of his son, judging him, that is, by what is common amongst ourselves, if not that he

might be fitted to wield the same sceptre, to sit on the same throne, to sustain, or even amplify, the empire which had risen to such a pitch of renown? Or if the monarch had felt how far more precious and costly was the wisdom which drew round him an audience from the ends of the earth, than royalty with its most brilliant insignia, at least you would have expected him to desire for his son that universal science, that mastery over deep and secret things, that vast and comprehensive knowledge, with which his name ever has been, and will continue, identified. And Solomon did desire wisdom for his son: Solomon did make his own happiness result, not from his son's being powerful, not from his being opulent, but from his being wise. But what wisdom did he crave for him? from what wisdom was he to draw gladness for himself? "My son, if thine heart be wise." Observe, we pray you, it is not "if thine head be wise," but "if thine heart be wise." And what is heart-wisdom? Nay, it is that which was never acquired in the schools, which may be wanting where there is the largest possible acquaintance with what passes for science, and possessed where there is the greatest possible ignorance of all of which philosophy boasts, or attempts, the scrutiny. Heart-wisdom is religion: he alone is wise in heart whose heart has been operated upon by the Spirit of God, so that he discerns the superiority of eternal things to temporal, and sets himself in earnest to the securing himself happiness in a world beyond the

grave. It were idle to apply the definition to any other case ; for no other kind of knowledge but the knowledge of God even pretends to make its seat in the heart : every other avowedly addresses itself to the understanding, and is satisfied in having the intellect devoted to its acquisition : but “ My son, give me thine heart,” is the address of God to every one of his rational creatures : and though He may use the head as an avenue to the heart, yet is there nothing really done in religion till the heart have been carried ; it is only in that inner shrine that there can be deposited “ the wisdom which is from above.” And you need only the slightest acquaintance with Scripture, and specially with the book of Proverbs, to be aware that they only are spoken of as actually wise who are “ wise unto salvation ;” no wisdom being thought worthy of the name which has not heaven for its origin and end, and the heart for its abode. There can, therefore, be no debate that what Solomon wished for, when wishing that his son might be wise in heart, was that this son might fear and love God ; that, whatever else he might acquire, and whatever else he might want, he might be truly religious, a follower of those who professed and felt themselves strangers upon earth.

But, alas ! how different for the most part is the wish of parents, at least if that wish be gathered from their actions, rather than their words ! Would it content most of us, would it gladden most of us,

that our children gave promise of piety, if, at the same time, they gave little or no promise of ability? Is it an indication of their being "wise in heart" which makes us thrill with pleasure? is it not rather an indication of their "being wise in head?" We wish for them the dangerous, if not the fatal, dowry of intellectual endowment; we long that they should be able to carry off the prizes at school and at college; and, perhaps, if the truth must be told, it would not be without a pang of disappointment and regret that we heard of their being fond of the Bible, but unable to make way in Latin and Greek. Not that there is any need for depreciating, for undervaluing, intellectual ability and literary acquirement. They are choice things; and if a child show talent, and if he outrun his competitors, there is no reason why a parent should not be gratified and thankful; the talent is God's gift, a gift which God designed to be employed and improved, and certainly we are neither to lament nor conceal it, as though it were not fitted for admirable purposes; we are rather to cultivate and develop it as that which may be largely beneficial, and vastly promote the Divine glory. But at least it can hardly be with unmixed pleasure that a right-minded parent marks the indications of ability in his child. What a perilous gift is talent! How likely to be wrongly directed! how sure, if it be, to work misery to its possessor, and to numbers besides! And even if well and successfully used, to what dangers does it

expose! the eminence to which it may raise a man, is but a point from which he may fall, fall with greater force, and with less hope of recovery.

Is then the want of talent in a child to be so deeply deplored? is the presence of it to be so admired? is that necessarily the flower, the hope of the family, who is all keenness and power, with mental grasp, and mental retentiveness, which give promise of the first-rate classic, or the distinguished mathematician? Alas! alas! how often is the first-rate classic the elegant trifler, and the distinguished mathematician the captious sceptic. And better the idiot with his shut-up mind, his stifled understanding, than the clever youth who is too witty for seriousness, or too argumentative for belief. No, no, let talent have its due place; let us assign to learning its due worth; but let us not speak of ourselves as Christian parents, if our first wish for our children be not that they may be religious, if their being wise in heart make not up, in our estimate, for every other deficiency. And yet, perhaps, whilst there is not one of you, who will not, in theory, assent to the justice of this decision, numbers of you know very well that it secretly condemns them. You are all alive to the indications of ability in your children; you are comparatively indifferent to the indications of piety. Well, then, compare yourselves with Solomon, Solomon who was, at least, better fitted than any of us to judge, from experience, as to what, in reality, is most to be desired for a

child. It may help to give a right direction to your wishes and endeavours, in the important matter of education—teaching you, not indeed to neglect the culture of talent, nor to despise the acquisition of knowledge, but to make every thing subordinate to your children being trained to remember their Creator in the days of their youth—to ponder the saying of Solomon, of Solomon the opulent, the mighty, the learned; he speaks to his child with all earnestness, and with all affectionateness; he urges his child by the love which a child should bear to his parent; but he does not say, My son, if thou become rich, if thou gain worldly distinction, if thou acquire great store of knowledge, then you will make me happy; he simply (O Christian parents strive to do the same), but pathetically, exclaims, “My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.”

Now this is using the text so as to make it furnish an admonition to parents; it was addressed however to a child, and we ought therefore to regard it as designed especially for the admonition of children. We endeavoured, at the outset of our discourse, to make you thoroughly aware of there being such links of association between parents and their children, that either consult for their own happiness in consulting for that of the other. It is important to keep this in mind; for if we now follow out the course indicated by the text, we must proceed to urge children, by their love for their

parents, and by their wish to gladden their hearts, to aim and labour at the acquiring true piety. But let not children think that this is urging them to make themselves miserable, that their parents may be happy,—parents made happy by the misery of their children! as well night caused by the rising of the sun. Oh no, my dear young friends, your being religious will make your parents happy; but why? because they know that else you cannot be truly happy yourselves. You will indeed contribute to their happiness, if they themselves know what happiness really is; but you will not contribute to it by taking from your own: you may fancy this till you make the experiment; but make it, try whether wisdom's ways be not ways of pleasantness, and you will find that fathers and mothers were but urging you to be happy in urging you to be righteous, that they were but entreating you to spare yourselves wretchedness, when telling you how it would gladden them to know you wise in heart.

And we speak now especially to those who have the advantage of religious parents, parents who endeavour to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,—an advantage not always felt at the time, nay, which is often regarded as an inconvenience and restraint; for the child of religious parents will sometimes look with a kind of envy on the child of more worldly, wishing for as much indulgence, or as little denial, in pleasures and pursuits which solicit the senses. But the advan-

tage is commonly recognized sooner or later ; few, who have been religiously brought up, die without blessing God for early instruction, or without bitterly bewailing their having despised parental admonitions. Mind that, my young friends ; I am talking to you now, rather than preaching ; perhaps you think it rather hard that you have not the same liberty which you see some others have, that you are kept from places to which others go, that you are not permitted to mix as much in gay and dissipated scenes. I dare say you sometimes wish that your parents were not quite so strict ; but you will live to feel that your parents were right ; I only hope that you will feel it before it is too late : how sad to find that you were taught the right way, when it shall no longer be in your power to turn out of the wrong.

But now, I want to speak to you as Solomon spake to his son : I would urge and persuade you to try, and mind all which you read in the Bible, assuring you that this will greatly delight your parents, and make their hearts glad. I would not speak to you, if I thought you did not care about pleasing your parents ; the child who does not mind whether he pleases, or vexes, his father and mother, must be a very wicked child : I am afraid there can be very little use in talking to such an one ; his heart must be too hard to be touched by my words : there will be need of many of the rough blows of sorrow and trouble to soften a child who is not

grieved when he grieves his kind parents. But I am speaking now to children who love their parents, and who wish to make them happy. What can you do to make them happy? I will tell you; try as much as ever you can to do your duty towards God. You know what your duty towards God is: you are taught it in your Catechism; there you learn that one part of this duty is to call upon God: that means, praying to God: but praying to God is something more than saying your prayers; you must remember what you are about: some children, whilst they say their prayers, think about their toys; this makes God angry, and if their parents knew it, this would make them sad. Then again, it is a part of your duty to God to honour his holy name and word. This means that you are to have a great respect and love for the Bible. The Bible, you know, is God's word: God told good men what to put in the Bible; and when, therefore, you read the Bible, you should remember that it is not a common book, that you are reading a lesson from God Himself: what a wicked thing to be careless and inattentive, when it is God Himself who is instructing you. And you are further taught by the Catechism, that your duty towards God is to "serve Him truly all the days of your life." It is very difficult to serve God; but the earlier you begin, the easier it will be. And the great thing is to try and remember that God always sees you, that you can never hide any thing from God, not even the thoughts of

your hearts. This will make you afraid of doing what you know to be wrong. Not that I want only to make you afraid of God; God made you his children when you were baptized, and He wishes you to love Him, even as He loves you. But if you begin with being afraid of displeasing Him, you will soon come to the being desirous of pleasing Him; you will read in the Bible how He sent his dear Son Jesus Christ to die for sinners, and how that blessed Saviour said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me;" and all this may bring you to the loving as well as the fearing God.

And if you will but indeed strive, in such simple ways as these, to perform your duty towards God, you will rejoice the hearts of your parents; the very thing which, as affectionate children, I am sure you are most desirous to do. You can all understand, you can all feel, this motive to the trying to serve God. If I were to preach to you about the greatness and awfulness of God, perhaps you would say, we hardly know what the clergyman means. If I were to tell you about being sick, and dying, and being buried, perhaps you would say that it was a dismal sermon, and that I only tried to frighten you, and make you sad, when there was no great occasion. But when I talk to you of trying to make your parents happy, of pleasing your parents, and giving them joy, you can all understand that, you all wish to do that. Well then, dear children, for the sake of your parents, try to do your duty towards God.

If they are good parents, this will make them happier than any thing else which you can do; and nothing will make them so sad as the seeing that you despise or dislike what is religious. They cannot be always at your side to tell you this. Perhaps they may soon die, and leave you orphans, and you will never hear their kind voices again as long as you live. But you may be sure that, whenever they have an opportunity of expressing their hopes and their wishes, of informing you how you may best repay all the anxiety, and toil and care, which you have cost them; ah, perhaps, even after their death,—for who can tell that dead parents do not remember, do not think upon, their children? they must remember, they must think upon them, if there be any remembrance, any thought, of earthly associations; and as angels are made glad by the repentance of sinners, may not the spirits of departed fathers and mothers rejoice in the growing piety of sons and of daughters?—but, at least, dear children, be assured that, so long as it shall be possible to give pleasure to your parents, you will give the most by earnest endeavours to keep God's commandments: your father says to you, your mother says to you, "My child, my child, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine."

We had purposed the working out in greater detail the principle involved in these words of Solomon; so that we might have set under other points of view the motive to the serving God,

derived from the satisfaction thereby caused to parents and kinsmen. We are quite aware that the motive may be accused of coming short of what motives should be, when it is such a high duty as that of serving God, to which we would incite whether the young or the old. But religion seeks to press into its employment all the affections and sensibilities of our nature. It makes its approaches through variety of avenues ; and we do very wrong, if, through any notion of lowering religion, of taking off from its dignity and royalty, we keep continually placing its claims on the most elevated grounds, and reject those points of attack which are certainly to be found in less lofty regions. It may have a better sound that we should launch forth at once on the obligation to serve and love God, considering Him as having created and redeemed us ; that we should introduce nothing subordinate or intermediate, but present Him, distinctly and directly, as the being on whom all affections must centre, and to whom all powers must be consecrated. But depend on it, so far as children especially are concerned, there is a vagueness and indefiniteness in this sublime presentation of Deity, which will operate greatly against the setting to work at the duties of religion. The child is lost : you put him to climb, and give him no ladder to climb by ; he cannot follow you into the pure seraphic region where you would have him find a home for the desires of his heart ; and whilst the young affections are going out, in their freshness and

their warmth, towards his parents, it will perhaps only come upon him as a chilling and deadening sound, to be told of a great invisible Being, whose word is to be his law, and the pleasing whom his end. Why not then strive to take advantage of the workings of natural affection, so that, as God has undoubtedly placed the parents between Himself and the child, as channels through which blessings shall be conveyed, the child may be led through the earthly father to the heavenly, his very love for those who gave him life being used for the raising him up into obedience to the universal Lord? This is virtually the method prescribed in the text; and it is characterized, as we believe, by profound practical wisdom. Solomon simply says to his child, "You love me; then, for my sake, try and serve God." He does not say, "Serve God for his own sake," though it must have been to this that he wished and purposed ultimately to bring the child; but he took advantage of the affection which was then in full play; and without attempting to give it any wrench by directing that it be turned upon another, leaving it in all its gracefulness and ardency, he merely told the child how he might best prove his love, and give most pleasure to its object. Oh, this was giving a hallowed character to domestic charities; this was consecrating to a noble purpose the sweet emotions which circulate between the parent and the child: and now the mother, as she sees fondness for herself beaming from the eyes of

one who has hung upon her breast, has no need to feel, alas! he is but giving me the love which he ought to give to God: she may rather be glad that so powerful a sentiment is at work, affording an immediate opening for the claims of religion; and throwing into her words all a mother's pathos, and all a mother's power, she may say to the affectionate child, eager to show his affection, "My child, my child, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine."

But we have not space to enlarge further on the principle in question. It must suffice that we have thrown out some hints which may assist you in making use of the natural affections towards the training up of your children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." You may work on them by their love for yourselves, when what you wish to produce in them is the love of God. But we must now turn to the claims of the National Schools of this vast town, which this day make their annual appeal to your bounty. The whole tenour of our discourse, as having had reference to the religious education of children, will have prepared you to regard with favour the petition of an institution, whose grand object, and chief labour, it is, to impart such an education to numbers who might otherwise be deprived of that advantage. You will not indeed expect that I can have any thing new to tell you with regard to your Schools; their best praise is, that they go on quietly and systematically in the old

beaten path, not indeed rejecting such improvements and additions as may have been suggested or demanded by the circumstances of the times, but holding fast by the truth that education in the principles of the Established Church is education in the fear of God, in loyalty, in virtue, in integrity, in all that befits a man, and beseems a Christian,—ay, that, in spite of the outeries and sneers of Sectarianism, to teach the Church Catechism is to teach pure Christianity, to train in Church discipline is to train for immortality.

We are forced to say as much as this in regard of the National system, so nobly defended and developed in Liverpool, yea, defended even by the more enlightened Dissenters; for from the one end of the land to the other, have been heard invectives against education according to the doctrines of the Church, as though it would be to contaminate the people, to diffuse amongst them sentiments subversive of their best interests here and hereafter, were there any such measures for general instruction as should even remotely involve the ascendancy of the Church as the authorized teacher. Be it so: we know which system has produced most of practical religion; we know where there is to be found most of that obedience to law, that patient industry, that quiet endurance of tribulation, that beautiful discharge of social duties, and that implicit reliance on the promises of Scripture, which, if they do not fit the poor to be the tools of demagogues, and the puppets

of faction, at least make them the safeguards of a state, the glory of a Christian community. But there is wisdom, there is policy, in determined resistance to the entrusting the Church with the education of the poor. Her enemies justly judge that there is no such effectual way of attacking the Church, as the withdrawing from her superintendence the masses of the rising generation. They would make her, if they could, the rich man's Church, knowing that fall she must, as fall she ought, though fall she shall not, if she cease to be the poor man's Church. Fall, we said, the Church shall not, not, at least, through ceasing to be the poor man's Church. For if the legislature, hampered by the conflicting interests of parties, can do little towards strengthening the Church in the great work of parochial education, the members of that Church will only feel themselves the more called on to come forward with liberal assistance.

Our text contains the principle of Church education, and Churchmen will rally round institutions where such principle is recognized. "My son, if thine heart be wise," not, "if thine head." It has been a thousand times said, it will never be disproved, that education without religion is not a blessing, but a curse. The enlightened philanthropist is not to be gladdened by the diffusion of merely intellectual education. He does not want a more knowing people, except as it shall be also a more godly. He deprecates the giving power separate

from the principle which insures its right use. His speech, therefore, is, "If thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine." Do then your part with the same liberality with which you have hitherto done it. Support as Churchmen, I will venture to say as Englishmen, the schools which now ask your succour, and which, from their very constitution, pledge themselves to the maintenance of Church principles. Show by your subscriptions that the Church is eager to discharge her office in regard of the instruction of the poor, that her conscience prompts to patient efforts and plenteous sacrifices, and will not let her children rest, except as they do their utmost towards implanting the fear of God in the rising generation. Thus will you be accumulating the material of a righteous gladness. You may yet live to see signs of moral verdure on the waste places of our land. Your heart shall rejoice, even yours.

This vast emporium of commerce, which has this day been seen in its glory,—for that glory is not so much its throng of traders, or the forest of masts from its magnificent docks, as the lengthened procession of the thousands whom it is training up in the fear of the Lord,—this vast emporium then of commerce, already an example to England by its vigorous support of Bible education, may increasingly exhibit, in its glorious prosperity, how true it is that those who honour Him, the Almighty will honour. Foremost in the endeavour to make wise the heart of

English youth, you may bequeath to children, and to children's children, that blessing of the Lord which "maketh rich," and to which, O blessed portion, He "addeth no sorrow."

SERMON XV.¹

THE TESTIMONY OF ENEMIES.

DEUTERONOMY xxxii. 31.

“Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.”

YOU are all aware that something like suspicion attaches to evidence which proceeds from the friends of a cause, and that the circumstance of a party having a direct interest in what he affirms often causes his affirmation to be received with some degrees of allowance. We cannot deny that our inclinations exert great influence over the judgment, so that even where there is no wish to exaggerate or misrepresent, undue weight will be given to the side which we are anxious to uphold. And it must equally be admitted, that when once we have en-

¹ Preached on Trinity Sunday, at St. Bride's, Fleet-street, on behalf of the London Fever Hospital.

gaged in the defence of a cause, many motives will combine to the keeping us firm; and the likelihood is far from inconsiderable, that aversion to the owning ourselves wrong will have as much sway as the consciousness that we are right.

It is partially thus in respect of the evidences of Christianity. The evangelists and apostles, on whose testimony we mainly rest the truth of our religion, were unquestionably men who had so embarked themselves in the cause of Christianity, that they might be considered as pledged to maintain it at whatever hazard. Their leaning was so much to its side, that they might be suspected of a bias which incapacitated them from the exercise of a sound judgment, and rendered their decisions at the least unsatisfactory. And certainly if it had been vastly for the interest of evangelists and apostles that they should adhere stedfastly to Christianity, there might have been fair ground for thus impugning their testimony. But, after all, unless men have something to lose by confessing themselves in the wrong, we are hardly warranted in expecting any singular obstinacy. Indeed, we have already admitted that reluctance to acknowledge error will do much towards producing constancy; so that a man might probably forego some advantage, and endure some inconvenience, rather than retract opinions once advanced. But if we carry our suppositions further, so as to bring them up to the case of the first publishers of our faith; if we attach to the maintenance of opinions

the loss of all that is held dear by men—reputation, and friends, and property, and life—then, indeed, there seems no ground for the impeachment of testimony; it is nothing to urge that the evidence is that of interested parties, when all that can be called their interests would have been consulted by abandoning their opinions, had they known them to be false.

It is in this manner that we rescue the Gospel histories from a suspicion which may be cast on them as the work of writers who were biassed to the side they support. We admit generally that the evidence of the warm friends of a cause must be received with some caution: their partiality may have exerted an influence on their judgment, and facts may have been exaggerated by the medium through which they are viewed. We admit also, that the having once avouched an opinion may produce determination to maintain it, even when men have become doubtful of its truth, and must in a degree be injured by upholding it. But we cannot allow that these admissions at all involve a suspicion as to the veracity of evangelists. Evangelists had every thing to give up, and nothing to gain, if they persisted in publishing Christianity; and we know not what but honesty of purpose, and a full conviction that they pleaded for truth, could have led them to brave shame, and poverty, and martyrdom, rather than retract what they had once boldly advanced.

But whilst we would thus contend that nothing

can be fairly urged against the testimony of evangelists, on the ground that it is the testimony of interested parties, we recur to our original position, and allow generally that the evidence of the friends of a cause is not of the same worth as that of its enemies. We receive the evidence of the friends with caution, because it is quite possible that their prejudices in its favour may have led to their magnifying facts and making light of objections. But when the evidence of enemies is in favour of a cause, we feel that we may receive it without the least hesitation—the enmity is our warrant that it would have been kept back, had it not been irresistible, and that, in place of being exaggerated, the almost certainty is that it has been reduced to the least possible strength. On these accounts we reckon the testimony of Judas Iscariot to the truth of Christianity more than commonly valuable, because, however suspicious you may be of the evidence of Peter and John, men who had attached themselves devotedly to Christ, you cannot look with the same doubtfulness on that of an apostate who sold his Lord for a paltry bribe. We need hardly observe, that much of direct testimony in support of a cause is hardly to be looked for from its enemies. There is inconsistency between the suppositions of men being the opponents of a system and explicit witnesses to its truth. When, however, there is no direct evidence, there may be indirect; and an adversary may unconsciously and unwittingly furnish

support more valuable than we gain from an advocate. Now our thoughts are on this Sunday especially turned by our Church on that great mystery of our faith, the doctrine of the Trinity. We may say of this doctrine, as generally of Christianity, that if we could find it in any way attested by enemies, there would be a worth in the attestation which belongs not to that of its most earnest friends. We must also say that direct attestation is not to be expected, or, to speak more truly, is impossible; for no man who disbelieves or denies the doctrine of the Trinity can, whilst numbered amongst its opponents, bear open testimony to its truth. But it is quite supposable that there may be indirect ways in which adversaries give a witness; and if such can be found, then all which has been said on the worth of their evidence should lead us to its diligent investigation. We cannot, however, apply ourselves to this search, until we have more opened the subject of discourse presented by our text.

The words which we have read to you occur in that song which Moses wrote in a book, and “spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel,” just before he ascended the mountain on which he was to die. The great lawgiver, forbidden to enter the promised land, takes a leave the most affectionate of those whom he had led through the wilderness, and bequeaths as his best legacy, exhortations to stedfastness in obeying Jehovah. There were gathered within the range of his vision the future fortunes of

Israel; and he alternately rejoiced and lamented as with prophetic gaze he marked the advancement and depression of God's chosen people. He well knew that the Almighty had so separated Israel for Himself, and had so appointed the seed of Abraham to greatness and sovereignty, that nothing but their own waywardness and rebellion could interfere with their prosperity and happiness. And therefore when he observed how the imagery of disaster crowded the yet distant scenes, he brake into the exclamation, "How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?" He saw that in place of carrying themselves successfully in the battle, the Israelites would yield to an inconsiderable force, and multitudes be discomfited by a handful of opponents. Why was this, unless because wickedness had provoked God to withdraw his protection and his strength? Was it that the false deities of the heathen were mightier than the Jehovah of Israel, and therefore ensured that victory should be on the side of their worshippers? Indeed the very adversaries themselves would not advance such assertion. They knew and they confessed that their sources of strength were inferior to those to which the Israelites might apply; and would not, therefore, themselves refer their success to the greater prowess of the power they adored. "Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." And well, then, might the lawgiver, whilst

on the point of being gathered to his fathers, expostulate indignantly with Israel on the madness of that idolatry into which he foresaw they would run. Their very enemies acknowledged that there was no rock like Jehovah, and yet the rock of these enemies would be preferred by them to their own.

Now it is a very remarkable assertion which is thus made by Moses, affirming that we may obtain that testimony from a foe, which, from the nature of the case, we should have expected only from a friend. We can hardly reconcile the facts, that the enemies of the Israelites acknowledged the superior strength of their rock, and yet continued to adhere to another and a weaker. But even these facts are not necessarily inconsistent. One idolatrous nation might believe that another served a mightier deity, and yet not attempt to substitute that deity for its own. The deity might be regarded as national, and no more to be changed than the climate or the soil. "Hath a nation changed their gods which are yet no gods?" is the expostulation of Jehovah with Israel, when reproaching them, by the mouth of Jeremiah, with their inconstancy and apostasy. And therefore it is not indispensable that we suppose the testimony of idolaters, to which Moses refers, to have been exclusively indirect. Indeed there are not wanting instances in Scripture of what may be reckoned direct testimony. The Canaanites, for example, had heard what God had done in Egypt; and Rahab's declaration to the two spies, who had come to spy

out Jericho, was, "As soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." Here, the Canaanites themselves being judges, their rock was not as the rock of Israel; for they had no confidence that their gods would shield them against the power of Jehovah. In like manner, when, in the days of Eli, the ark of the covenant of the Lord was brought into the camp of Israel, the Philistines were sore afraid, and exclaimed, "Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods?" They probably regarded the ark in the light of an idol; and they frankly owned that they dared not expect that their deities would prove as strong as those of the enemy. We may add that both Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, awed by demonstrations of the might of Jehovah, published decrees which recognized his supremacy, and which clearly showed that, themselves being judges, their rock was not as that of their captives, the Jews. These are perhaps instances of what may be called direct testimony on the part of idolaters to the superiority of Jehovah over all which they worshipped as God. But probably it is not to direct testimony that Moses refers. He may only have intended to assert that Jehovah had given such demonstrations of supremacy as should have carried conviction to the servants of false gods. And when you remember what had been done in the leading

Israel from Egypt—the plagues which had overthrown their enemies, the dividing of the waters, the miracles in the wilderness—you must admit that all who heard what the Lord had effected on behalf of his people, were so furnished with proofs of his pre-eminence, that, themselves being judges, He ought to have been acknowledged as the alone true God.

But it is unnecessary that we search further into the bearings of our text as originally delivered. There is nothing, so far as we can see, to confine the passage to the time when it was uttered—the lawgiver is gathering all ages into his last words; and we may suppose therefore that this testimony of enemies is to be found at one period as well as at another. We come down then at once to our own day and generation, and, confronting all those by whom Christianity is opposed, would know whether it be not demonstrable that “their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges?” We shall not appeal to the writings of adversaries, because direct testimony is almost excluded by the very nature of the case. It is not indeed difficult to produce from the works of men who never embraced Christianity, evidences of its truth, and acknowledgments of its power on the lives of its professors, which go to prove this religion superior, in its claims and its influence, to every other system which has prevailed upon earth. It is well known that heathen historians strikingly cor-

roborate the records of evangelists, and that they speak, in the largest and most unqualified terms, of the virtues of the early followers of Christ. And it were easy to arrange these admissions into something of a demonstration that, in the judgment of the adversary, however unconscious he might be of passing such judgment, there was a truth and a strength in Christianity which placed it far above all idolatrous systems. But this line of argument would not conduct to much that is practically important; neither would it have any bearing on the doctrine which is this day commended to our special attention. We therefore limit our enquiry to testimony which is altogether indirect, given without design, but not with the less force. We regard as emphatically the enemies of Christianity, those who absolutely reject Revelation, and those who, professedly receiving it, explain away its chief mysteries. The first is the Deist, who will have nothing but what he is pleased to call natural religion, and who denies that God hath made any disclosures to his creatures but what are graven on the visible universe, or on the tablet of conscience. The second is the philosophizing Christian, whether he style himself the Arian, or the Socinian, or the Unitarian, who in some way or another impugns the doctrine of the Trinity, and therefore removes from the Bible the great truth of an atonement for sin. These, we say, are the chief enemies of Christianity; and it is from these we are to seek a testimony to the excellence of that creed

which we ourselves profess to have adopted. And, therefore, through the remainder of our discourse, there will be two great truths at whose illustration we must labour—the first, that the rock of the Deist is not as our rock, the Deist himself being judge; the second, that the rock of the Unitarian is not as our rock, the Unitarian himself being judge.

Now we shall begin with an argument which is applicable to every species of infidelity, whether it take the form of a total or of only a partial rejection of Scripture. We are well aware that various causes may be popularly assigned for a man's adoption whether of Deism or Socinianism, and that he may be declared quite candid and honest in his disbelief of Christianity or its fundamental doctrines. There are not wanting advocates of a sentiment which we hold to be itself nothing better than infidel, the sentiment that a man is not answerable for his creed. But we are sure, in opposition to all this spurious liberality, that God hath made truth so accessible to every fair and right-minded enquirer, that there is no possibility of its eluding his search. We are sure that the evidences for the truth of Christianity are so numerous and decisive, and the statements of doctrine so clear and explicit, that there can be no such thing as unavoidable Deism, no such thing as unavoidable Socinianism. We must express to you our conviction, that the source of infidelity is exclusively in the heart; and that, however sincere a man may seem

in his pursuit after truth, it is through nothing but a wish to be deceived that he is at last landed in error. We know not how any one who ascribes to God the attributes which belong essentially to his nature, can uphold an opposite opinion; for unless it be conceded that God has so revealed his will as to make it our own fault if we continue in ignorance, there is manifestly no place for human accountability and the processes of judgment. And therefore are we persuaded—and it is not a seeming want of charity which can induce us to keep back the persuasion—that pride and dislike to the high morality of the Gospel are in the main the producing causes of infidelity. Who thinks that there would be any thing approaching to rejection of Christianity, if it were a system which at all flattered our pride, or showed indulgence to our passions? We should have no Deism, if the contents of Revelation were not designed to humble us, and produce self-denial; we should have no Socinianism, if the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity demanded not the unqualified submission of our reason. But it ought to be evident that no religious system would be adapted to our nature and condition, which did not set itself vigorously against our pride and our passions. It ought to be evident that without some great moral renovation, a thorough change in the dispositions and tendencies with which we are born, we cannot be fitted for intercourse with such a Being as God must necessarily be, nor for the enjoyment of such

happiness as can alone be looked for as his gift to his creatures. It ought, therefore, to commend itself to us as an incontrovertible truth, that Christianity is worthy our credence and our veneration, in exact proportion as it tends to the production of humility and of holiness. And if in any way, whether direct or indirect, there be put forth a confession that Christianity is more adapted than some other system to the subduing the haughtiness and corruptions of our nature, we may affirm of such confession that it amounts to a direct testimony to the superiority of our religion.

But we maintain that this very confession is furnished by the rejection of Christianity. We find the causes of rejection in the humiliating and sanctifying tendencies of the religion. We trace Deism and Socinianism, and under these every form of infidelity, to a cherished dislike to truth which demands the subjugation of self, and the prostration of reason. What, then, does the rejection prove, but that the embraced system is more complacent to pride and more indulgent to passion? And if it prove this, it is itself nothing less than a testimony on the side of Christianity. It is an acknowledgment that Christianity is better fitted than the spurious faith by which it is superseded for the beating down those lofty imaginations, and eradicating those unrighteous propensities, which must be subdued and uprooted ere there can be hope of admission into the purity and the blessedness of

heaven. It is, therefore, a declaration,—ay, and a more open and direct could not be more emphatic—that if regard be had to the moral wants of humanity, to the circumstances under which we are placed, and to the renewal of which we are palpably in need, then the religious system opened up to us by the Gospel is of incomparably greater worth than any which men propose to substitute in its stead. Oh, it is no argument to me, but altogether the reverse, against the truth, whether of Christianity in general, or of its peculiar doctrines, that many in every age have rejected Revelation or explained away its mysteries. I would know something of the causes which have generated Deism and Unitarianism: and the more I search, the more is the conviction forced on me, that the Bible is repudiated because at war with all that man naturally loves, and its distinguishing doctrines denied because requiring that reason submit to God's Word. And if I am not wrong in this conviction—and I can be wrong only if God may be charged with the ignorance and the sin of his creatures—why what is the Deist and what the Unitarian but a witness to me of the worth of Christianity? Rejected or mutilated because diametrically opposed to pride or to passion, the rejection or the mutilation undeniably proves that what is substituted for genuine Christianity is less adapted to our moral necessities. And therefore it is not to the martyr alone, dying rather than cast away his faith, that I appeal for evidence to the superiority of our rock. It is not to

those who have made trial of this rock, and who building thereupon have reared structures which the tempest could not shake, and which, as they rose, have been more fitted for the indwellings of Deity. We can challenge the very adversaries to bear testimony. We can wring a witness to the superiority of Christianity as an engine adapted to the exigences of a disorganized creation, from the secret yet discernible reasons which cause a land to be deformed by many shapes of infidelity. Oh, knowing that these reasons have to do with the humiliating and sanctifying tendencies of the religion of Jesus, and that consequently what is substituted for this religion must less tend to humble, and less tend to sanctify, and, therefore, be less fitted for such beings as ourselves, we can triumphantly look our opponents in the face, and unflinchingly declare that "their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

But in this argument we have associated the several kinds of infidelity, and derived the evidence of which we are in search from Unitarianism as well as from Deism. But we would now confine ourselves to the case of the Deist; and we think it a fair way of forcing from him evidence as to the worth of Revelation, to require that he compare the state of a Christian nation with that of a heathen. If he be right in contending that there has been no Revelation, and that men need no Revelation, but that reason is sufficient as a guide and instructor, he

cannot object to our trying his theory by the test of experience, and appeal to undeniable facts. We draw, then, a contrast between what was effected towards the amelioration of human condition whilst heathenism had the world to itself, and what has been done since Christianity gained partial sway. We will take the most favourable exhibition which ancient records furnish, where an empire extended itself over half the globe, where arts flourished in their fullest efflorescence, where poetry was in all its harmony, and philosophy in all its vigour. And would any man desire to be transported back nineteen centuries, that he might be the citizen of a country which had thus reached the summit of renown, whose monuments are still our studies, and from whose ruins we yet gather the models of our sculpture and our architecture? We are sure that, whatever differences of opinion there may be as to the cause, there must be universal agreement as to the fact, that in all which gives real dignity to a state, in the defining and defending genuine liberty, in all which tends to promote and uphold public prosperity, and to secure peace and happiness to the families of a land, there is no comparison between the advances made whilst reason was man's only instructor, and those which may be traced since reason had the aids of a professed Revelation. We are not afraid to refer it to the decision of the most inveterate opponent of Christianity, whether civilization has not advanced with a most rapid

march wheresoever the Gospel has gained footing; and whether the institutions of a country professedly Christian could be exchanged for those of the most renowned in heathen times, without the loss of what we hold dearest in our charter, and the surrender of what sheds their best beauty round our homes? We have never heard of so thorough and consistent an advocate of the sufficiencies of reason, that he would contend for the superior civilization, the finer jurisprudence, the greater civil liberty, the purer domestic happiness, attained to whilst reason was not interfered with by communications which avouch themselves from God. We are bold to affirm that he who is most strenuous in opposing Christianity, and most vehement in decrying it, thinks it fortunate for himself that he has been born in Christian times and a Christian land. And this is enough to enable us to extort from him a testimony to the superiority of our rock. He may refuse to give us a testimony; but, whether he will or no, it is furnished by his own admissions. We only ask whether he prefers what reason achieved by herself to what has been achieved since the coming of Christ; and knowing what his answer must be, we know also that he is a witness to the worth of Christianity. We know what his answer must be. We know that he would be ashamed to wish the restoration of the worship of a thousand impure and fabled deities. We know that he would not dare to uphold the advantages of being ignorant whether or not the soul were im-

mortal. We know that he could not decide that there was as much protection for property, as staunch a guardianship of the helpless, as equable a distribution of justice, as active a benevolence towards the suffering and the destitute, as general a diffusion of respectability and happiness, whilst the world was left to its own strength and wisdom, as now that a religion has been introduced which professes to rest on immediate Revelation.

And this is enough to warrant our claiming him as a witness to the superiority of our rock. He may imagine other reasons by which to explain the advancement which he cannot deny. He may pretend to assign causes which account for the improvement, and which are wholly independent on Christianity. But we contend that in the possession of Christianity alone lies the difference between ourselves and the nations whom we have vastly outstripped. We do not excel them in the fire of genius, and the vigour of intellect; for even now they are our teachers in the melody of verse, and in the strictness of reasoning, and in the mightiness of oratory; and we sit at their feet, when we would learn to be mentally great. We dare not affirm that reason, by herself, could ever achieve more than she achieved in Greece or in Rome—for we are still but the pupils of the dead sages of these ancient states; we light our torch at their inextinguishable lamps, and, if ever we rival their literature, we presume not to think that we ever surpass. And therefore does the asser-

tion seem every way correct, that we should never have stood higher than they in all those respects in which, confessedly, they are immeasurably distanced, had we not been blessed with the revelation of the Gospel. The world had gone as far as it was possible for it to go with no guide but reason, and then Christ appeared to show how inconsiderable the progress had been. We challenge then the rejecter of Revelation. We summon him as a witness on the side of that which he openly denies. We have his confession—he cannot keep back his confession—that, wheresoever Christianity has prevailed, there has been a rapid advance in all that gives fixedness to government, sacredness to every domestic relationship, and therefore happiness to households. And this is virtually a confession, however he may seek out some subterfuge, that natural religion is vastly inferior to revealed as an engine for heightening the morals, and improving the condition of humankind; that the guidance of reason alone is in no degree comparable to that of Revelation, when the ends proposed are those which are eagerly sought by every foe of evil, and every friend of man—and oh, then, is it not a confession which warrants us in affirming, when opposing such as reject the Gospel of Christ, that “their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges?”

But we are aware that in this last argument we have not taken the highest ground which we are entitled to occupy. We have striven to show you

that an acknowledgment may be wrung from the Deist to the worth of Christianity, considered in regard of its power to promote the well-being of society. But this is not the most important point of view under which we have to consider Christianity. The excellence of a religion should be tried by its power of preparing man for death. It is in directing us how to provide for the future that a religious system is valuable; and though it may confer collateral benefits, and improve the temporal condition of a people, we can form no estimate of its worth as a religion, until we have examined it as a guide to immortality. And if Deism and Christianity are to be compared on a death-bed, we shall readily gain the testimony which is asserted in our text. We cannot fully apprehend what it is to put away Revelation, and cast one's self on the resources of reason, until we have brought principles to the last hour of life, and determined what power they have of sustaining man in the throes of dissolution. It is then, when all which may have cheered us on in a career of pride and misdoing is being rapidly withdrawn, and the soul feels that she must go forth in her solitariness, and abide the searchings of judgment, that the worth of a religious creed must be tried—and worse than vain is that dependence which fails us in this extremity, worse than useless a system which gives way when we most need support. And without denying that Christians, for the most part, live far below their privileges, so that the hour of

death is not regarded with that composure and confidence which should follow on the knowledge that the last enemy will be swallowed up in victory, we may safely declare that nothing can be compared to the religion of Jesus, when triumph over the grave is the respect in which comparison is instituted. Our appeal is to known matters of fact; it is not by argument that we can make good this point. It will not then be denied that persons of every age, and of every rank in life, are continually meeting death with calmness, and even with joy—the principles of Christianity being those by which they are sustained, and its hopes those by which they are animated. And as little can it be controverted that the disciples of Deism shrink from dissolution, and that never are their death-beds such as a spectator would desire for his own. We admit that Deists have died with apparent unconcern; but as it was with our two great historians, Gibbon and Hume, their very eagerness to occupy themselves with something trifling and frivolous, has proved incontestably a restlessness at heart, and betrayed an anxiety to drown serious thought. In attempting to play the hero, they have played the buffoon. And, in other cases, in what agony, and with what remorse, have the disciples of infidelity crossed the borderline of eternity. There are few histories more thrilling, or fuller of horror, than those of the last hours of Paine or Voltaire. And where there has been neither affected indifference, nor excruciating

dread, we are not afraid to declare that there has been nothing which approached to tranquillity or gladness. Men may have gone hence without betraying any particular emotions. "The wicked," saith the Psalmist, "have no bands in their death;" and those who have gone the fearful lengths of denying Christ, and rejecting Revelation, may sink into an apathy, and exhibit such blunted sensibilities, as shall pass with those around for peace and composure.

But where have been the beamings, the flashings, of hope and exultation? Where the boundings of the spirit, elastic with immortality, as angel forms have seemed to beckon it, and the street of gold, and the tree of life, to break on its vision? Where the palpable mastery over death, the holy defiance of all the powers of dissolution, the vivid anticipations of happiness, the affectionate exhortations to survivors, that they tread the same path, the whispered assurance that there shall be reunion in a bright world, where the "wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest?" Oh, we shall wait in vain to have these produced from the death-bed of the Deist. We are willing that the records of Deism should be searched; but we are confident that not an instance can be found in which the dying unbeliever could exclaim with rapture or with serenity, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And, therefore, is the Deist a witness to the worth of Christianity. Therefore do we appeal

to him in evidence that the religion of reason is not to be compared with the religion of revelation. He may boast the massiveness and solidity of his rock; and he may depreciate the strength, and attempt to undermine the foundations, of ours. But we will make proof of the two rocks, and examine how they stand, whilst the earthly house of this tabernacle is being taken down by death. We observe that he who has builded on the rock of Christianity meets the destroyer with confidence, and is manifestly a conqueror at the very moment of being conquered. But he who has builded on the rock, if such it may be called, of Deism, has nothing with which to oppose death but an unbecoming levity, or a stupid indifference; and if not aghast with terror, is void of all hope. And this is not supposition. This is no inference of our own, which the Deist may controvert by argument. Our appeal is exclusively to registered facts. Our challenge is to the Deist himself, to the Deist in his last struggle, when he has little temptation, and less power, to deliver a false testimony. And, oh, if after we have depicted to our adversaries the beautiful brightness which adorns the evening of a righteous life, and told them of the holy boldness with which the naturally timid advance into eternity, and shown how the chamber in which the Christian breathes out his soul is a privileged place, a place where we have visible proof that death is abolished, a place where, if tears be shed, they are quickly dried up, as by a supernatural radiance, a

place whence bequeathments of hope and of comfort are sent to every part of a bereaved family, or a sorrowing neighbourhood; oh! we say, if, after this, our adversaries have nothing on their side to display but a chilling apathy, or an assumed indifference, or the desperate anguish of a storm-tossed spirit, have we not right to class these very adversaries themselves amongst the advocates of our cause? have we not warranty for declaring, when Deists practically confess, by the way they meet death, that the rock on which they build is breaking into shivers, that “their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges?”

Now we consider that much, if not all, of this latter reasoning is as applicable in the case of the Unitarian, as in that of the Deist. We believe that where there has been rejection of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the doctrine of an atonement for sin, there is never any of that calmness and confidence in dying, which may continually be seen where the trust rests on the great propitiation. And the rock of the Unitarian is not as our rock, the Unitarian himself being judge, if the man who thinks to be his own peace-maker with God, can exhibit none of that assurance, when passing into eternity, which the very weakest possess who know that their sins have been laid upon a surety.

But we have other ways in which to make good this, the second, position into which our text was resolved. We would observe that the mystery of

our faith, against which the Unitarian specifically sets himself, and on which our Church now directs us to turn your attention, is beyond question an unfathomable depth—the union of three persons in one essence being utterly incomprehensible by our own, and indeed probably by any finite, intelligence. But with every admission of the greatness of the mystery, we feel it our duty to warn you against distinguishing the mystery of the Trinity from other mysteries in the Godhead, as though it were more stupendous, or less to be understood. We would always oppose ourselves to the making such distinction, as we would to the advocacy of fatal error. It is just here that the Unitarian stumbles; and having attempted to separate between mysteries all equally inexplicable, is presently involved in a vast labyrinth of falsehood. You can no more comprehend how God can be every where, than how God can be three in one. The doctrine of the Divine omnipresence baffles our reason to the full as much as the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity. I cannot conceive how Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each by Himself God, each equally possessing all the incommunicable properties of the Divine nature, should yet together constitute the one eternal indivisible Jehovah. But neither can I conceive how, at the same moment, a being can be present, in all his integrity and all his supremacy, in this our scene of assembling, and in the furthest corners of immensity. Is it more of a mystery, that three should be so combined into one that there is distinction and yet

unity, than that one should be so universally diffused, and yet so entirely circumscribed, that He is now by my side in all his magnificent attributes, and yet equally on every star which is walking the firmament, and equally with every creature throughout the sweep of unlimited space? We may make the same assertion of other properties of Deity. Once introduce the rule that we are not to admit what overpasses reason, and we can have no Creator but a creature. The eternity of our Maker, that He is from everlasting and to everlasting; his omniscience, that "all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do;" his omnipotence, that "he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast;" I have no faculties with which to comprehend any one of these properties: the more I meditate, the more am I confounded; and after every attempt to find out God, I can but pronounce Him one mighty mystery, to be adored in all respects, and scrutinized in none.

Now if the principle on which the Unitarian proceeds in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, be thus a principle which equally requires that we deny to Godhead whatever distinguishes it from finite subsistence, we hold that, by the decision of the Unitarian himself, his rock is not as our rock. The Unitarian himself being judge, reason is to prescribe the limits of faith, and we are to receive nothing but what we can comprehend. Then, we contend, the Unitarian himself being judge, we are to worship a God who is not omniscient, and not

everlasting, and not omnipresent. We guide ourselves by the judgment of the Unitarian. He gives as an instance of the application of his rule, the exclusion from our creeds of the doctrine that there are three persons in the Godhead. Then of course in the judgment of the Unitarian, we are to exclude whatever is as incomprehensible as this doctrine. What then are we to do with the doctrine that God is equally every where? what with that of his having had no beginning? These are at the least as much above reason as the doctrine of the Trinity, though of none of them can you show that it is contrary to reason. So that, proceeding upon nothing but the verdict of the Unitarian, and following out implicitly his decision, we represent to ourselves a Deity in whom indeed is no mystery, but in whom therefore is no divinity. And if it be by simply obeying the rule laid down by the Unitarian, that we thus imagine a being on the throne of the universe, with none of those properties which belong essentially to Godhead, why, we must be warranted in declaring that the Unitarian, if consistent with his own principles, must adore as supreme one who wants the characteristics of supremacy, and who cannot therefore deliver; and that consequently, "his rock is not as our rock," the Unitarian himself "being judge."

But there is yet another mode in which the Unitarian attests the superiority of our rock. We would remind you of the importance of regarding the doctrine of the Trinity as a practical doctrine. Men are apt to consider it a matter of abstruse specula-

tion, and fail to observe how the whole of the peculiar system of Christianity stands or falls with this mystery. And hence they are offended at what they count the harshness of the Athanasian Creed; just as though the points in debate were points on which men might innocently differ. But, of course, if you deny the doctrine of the Trinity, you deny also the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; so that the great matter at issue between ourselves and the Unitarian is, whether Jesus the Mediator were God, or only man. And on the decision of this question hangs the decision of another, and that the most practically interesting which can be agitated amongst men, whether the Gospel be merely a system of purer morality, and loftier sanctions, than had before obtained upon earth, or whether it be a system of supernatural helps, of a real atonement for sin, and of the vicarious obedience of a surety. Unless Christ be God, it is certain that He can have made no expiation for the guilt of humankind, and that He can have merited nothing on our behalf. He may have taught many noble truths, He may have raised the standard of morals, He may have brought the rewards and punishments of another life to bear on the duties of the present, He may have set a marvellous example of purity, and benevolence, and patience, and confirmed his doctrines by his death; but He can have effected no change in our moral position before God: He cannot, by the sacrifice of Himself, have taken away the sin of the world; He cannot have “redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made

a curse for us." So that, when he has rejected the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, the Unitarian, if consistent with himself, must reject every doctrine which is peculiar to Christianity, and reduce the Gospel into little better than an authoritative republication of natural religion. The Unitarian must, of necessity, look to be saved by his repentance and obedience: having no confidence in the merits of another, his whole dependence must be on his own.

Now we are not about to show what we may suppose you all readily acknowledge, the vast inferiority of the Unitarian system to the orthodox, when the two are compared in their adaptation to the wants of such creatures as ourselves. This were an easy task; but it is not this which is set us by our text. It is not the superior strength of our rock which we have to demonstrate, but the fact that the enemy himself is a witness to that superior strength. And this we attempt by the following simple reasoning. The Unitarian looks to be saved by repentance and obedience, no respect being had to the merits of a Mediator. Now repentance and obedience are an important part of our system, as well as of that of the Unitarian. We hold, as well as he, that no man can be saved, unless he repent and do works meet for repentance. And it were absurd to say that the motive to good living is not, at the least, as strong to those who trust in Christ, as to those who trust in themselves. It is a truth, attested by the experience of the Church in all ages, that no principle

is so influential on the conduct as that of faith in the Saviour. So that our system embraces all which that of the Unitarian embraces; whilst it adds doctrines which, if true, cannot be omitted without ruin, and which, if false, serve only to strengthen us in that holiness on which our acceptance is to rest. If, then, the Unitarian be right, he has no advantage over us—repentance and obedience being presented at least equally under both systems. But if the Unitarian be wrong, we have unspeakably the advantage over him; we have a Surety in whose perfect satisfaction to find refuge, when the worthlessness of all that man can effect for himself is being proved before the Judge of quick and of dead. If we err in acknowledging the Deity in Christ, and considering his death a sacrifice for sin, the error must be innocent; for with the mass of men it is unavoidable—the language of Scripture being apparently so strong and so explicit on these points, that the generality of persons, who are not great scholars and not fine critics, can attach to it no meaning, but that Jesus is God, and that He died as the substitute of sinners. It cannot, therefore, be for our injury that we honour Christ as Divine, and regard his death as propitiatory, inasmuch as the Bible is so written that opposite conclusions can be reached only by processes which lie out of reach of the great body of men. And what, then, has the Unitarian to say of our rock, except that it is stronger than his own? He would tell us that we need nothing but repentance and obedience, in order to the gaining favour with

God: and we bring to our Maker the offering of repentance and obedience, though we are not bold enough to think that it can be of worth enough to procure us reward. He would tell us that we are to look to Christ Jesus only as a pattern: and we feel it bound on us as a most solemn duty to take the Saviour as our example, though we add to this the taking Him as our propitiation. He would tell us that there is mercy with our Creator for creatures who are compassed with infirmities: and we too rest all hope on the mercy of the Most High, though we feel it also necessary that his justice should be satisfied. He would tell us that there is a moral energy in our nature, by which men may subjugate their lusts and live righteously and godly: and we know it our business to work out salvation, and strive for the mastery, though we reckon all the while on the assistances of a Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. And when, therefore, we try the strength of our rock on the principles of the Unitarian himself, we prove it incontestably stronger than his. The Unitarian shall be judge. The Unitarian shall state the grounds on which immortal beings like ourselves may safely rest our hope that the coming eternity shall not be one of anguish. Repentance, good works, the imitation of Christ, the known mercy of God—if he advance these, we go along with him in constructing a rock on which to rest. We, too, hold that the ceasing to do evil, the learning to do well, the following Jesus, the appeal to Divine compassions, are modes in which the wrath of the

ever-living God is to be turned away from those who are born under condemnation. And if, therefore, the rock of the Unitarian is a firm rock, ours is as firm, for the same elements of strength, and in at least the same degree, enter into both.

But this is nothing. We are not content with a confession of equality; we seek one of superiority. And it cannot be kept back. We only add to the Unitarian's rock what, on his own principles, may amazingly strengthen it, and on no supposition can weaken. He rests on righteousness, and we add a righteousness in which there cannot be a flaw. He rests on mercy as inclining towards the weak, and we add a covenant by which mercy is unalterably pledged. He rests on repentance, as though it made amends for transgression, and we add an atonement which has removed human guiltiness. He rests on native energy as that through which every duty may be performed, and we add a superhuman might which can in no case be deficient. What then? We have but accumulated on his rock, and that too in an unmeasured degree, those very elements of solidity which, himself being judge, must be found in the basis on which men build for eternity. And if it should be proved at last that all thus accumulated is worthless, and must be swept away, there will yet remain a rock as firm as his: whereas, if it should be proved that all this is necessary, he will be without a resting-place amid the convulsions of the judgment. On whose side, then, is the advantage? Our rock, examined by his own tests, cannot, on

any supposition, prove weaker than his; whereas his, if he be wrong in his theory, will be found as the sand, whilst ours, like the adamant, is immoveable, infrangible. Oh, then, if making trial of the respective grounds of confidence on the very principles of the Unitarian himself, estimating relative strength on the supposition that what the Unitarian calls strength actually is strength, it appears that we cannot be hereafter in a worse position than the Unitarian, but that the Unitarian may be in one immeasurably more insecure than ourselves; why, is it not the verdict of our very adversary himself, that there is not the certain fixedness in his foundation which there is in ours? and are we exaggerating the testimony which deniers of the Trinity, unconsciously it may be, but yet powerfully furnish, when we affirm that "their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges?"

But there is yet one more illustration which ought to be given of our text. We have been engaged in showing how arguments in favour of Christianity may be wrested from our adversaries; it behoves us to take heed that arguments against it be not derivable from ourselves. We gain the best of the former from the tacit confession of more sanctifying doctrine; and we may furnish the latter by the open demonstration of unsanctified lives. If we would prove the rock of the enemy unlike our rock, even on the testimony of the enemy himself, let us see to it that we build on that rock so noble a superstructure, a superstructure of good works, that the

very adversary shall be forced to confess the superiority of the doctrine from the superiority of the fruits. We can challenge the heathen of old times, and force him to confess our rock the best; for he never reared the hospital, the asylum, the infirmary, whilst Christianity has covered the earth with structures for the sick and afflicted. But we are not content with the witness of the heathen; we want that of every adversary of truth; and we now appeal to you for additional evidence, that there is nothing like orthodox doctrine for producing a liberal care of the suffering.

And never were you solicited for your bounty in a case more urgent than the present. The Fever Hospital—the name explains the institution: but I might speak to you for an hour, and not compass half the reasons why you should give in large measure. In this densely populated metropolis, fever often rages to a fearful extent, and assumes a most malignant type. If our great hospitals do not feel it indispensable to close their doors against patients on whom fever has seized, yet the disease is of such a nature, that there ought confessedly, in the hope of arresting contagion, to be a separate establishment for the reception of the sufferers. And therefore was the London Fever Hospital erected, its wards being open to those only who are afflicted with some form of the disease which the definition includes. But what is this hospital able to effect? in what degree does it meet the demand for such an institution? Alas, alas! its officers have been un-

wearied, its attendants have caught the fever and died by the side of those to whom they ministered; but the public has been scanty in supplying adequate funds; and it is quite frightful to hear how, during the past year for example, the resources of the hospital proved insufficient for the wants of the sick. Sometimes there have been a dozen applicants for the first vacant bed—and these applicants with the parched tongue, and the rapid pulse, and the burning, beating brow. Often when the bed has become vacant it has been found that several of the applicants had died during the interim. Perhaps they might have been saved by timely succour: but the uncooled fire scorched and scathed them; and they were hurried into another world, to give testimony how Christians were showing love to God. In some cases, the patient has expired before the bed could be prepared; and in five instances, when the vehicle in which the patient had been removed from his dwelling arrived at the gate of the hospital, alas! he asked no bed but the grave, for life was already extinct. There, Englishmen, there, Christians, is this a state of things which you will permit to continue? Why, if it were merely a regard for public and personal safety which actuated us, we ought to interfere. We are leaving the metropolis open to a plague, we are exposing our own households to the most terrible disease, whilst we suffer our courts and alleys to be infested with fever, and take no adequate measures for arresting its progress.

But I wave this argument: I am asking for de-

monstration of the superiority of our rock : I must, therefore, have a disinterested and a Christian liberality. I may, however, paint to you its objects—oh, that I could. The poor creature, seized on by fever, is perhaps shunned by all around him : they dread the infection ; they almost fear to approach him, lest there should be death in the touch. As the only resource, he is conveyed towards the Hospital ; for if there be room, disease is the only passport asked for admission. If there be room—then the sufferer may be refused ; the death-thirst seems already upon him, perhaps delirium has begun, and the wild wandering eye shows the mind to be unhinged. And is such an one to be refused ? At this moment, perhaps, he might be, but not to-morrow ; and why not to-morrow ? Because this congregation is about to come nobly forward, and throw funds into the hands of the committee for completing that enlargement of the institution which want of money, and nothing else, retards. And why do I know that this congregation will make this great effort ? Because they build upon orthodox doctrine as their rock ; and because, as I am persuaded, they feel it incumbent on them to make good our text, in regard of all adversaries of this doctrine, “ Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges.”

THE END.

DATE DUE

~~JUN 15 1961~~

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